

B. Shadlow

THE
CHILDREN

OF THE
ABBAY,
A TALE.

—•••••—
IN FOUR VOLUMES.
—•••••—

BY
REGINA MARIA ROCHE.

—•••••—
A matchless pair;
With equal virtue form'd and equal grace,
The same, distinguish'd by their sex alone;
Her's the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his the radiance of the risen day.

THOMSON.

—•••••—
VOL. III.

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LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,
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A matchless pair,
Which equal virtue found and equal grace;
The same, distinguished by their sex and age;
Here's the mild lover of the glowing morn,
And his the valiant warrior of the evening day.
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CHILDREN

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CHAP. I.

SHE remained a considerable time in a state of insensibility, and, when recovered, she found herself in a bed laid upon the floor in a corner of the outside room ; her senses were at first confused, she felt as if waking from a disagreeable dream, but in a few minutes a perfect recollection of what had past returned, she saw some one sitting by the bed ; she raised herself a little, and perceived sister Mary : " This is indeed a charitable visit," cried she, extending her hand, and speaking in a low broken voice. The good-natured nun jumped from her seat on hearing her speak, and embraced her most tenderly. Her caresses affected Amanda

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B

inexpressibly ;

inexpressibly; she dropped her head upon her breast, and wept with a vehemence which relieved the oppression of her heart.

Sister Mary said, she had never heard of her return to the country till Mrs. Brien came to St. Catherine's for a few sprigs of rosemary to strew over the poor captain; she had returned with her then to the cabin to try if she could be of any service, and to invite her, in the name of the prioress and the whole sisterhood, to the convent.

Amanda thanked her for the kind invitation, which, she said, she must decline accepting for a few days, till she had performed all her duties, which, in a voice half stifled by sobs, she added, "the grave would soon terminate; she was sorry, (she said) that they had undressed her, and requested sister Mary to assist her in putting on her clothes." The sister tried to dissuade her from this, but soon found she was determined to spend the remainder of the night in her father's apartment: She accordingly dressed her, for Amanda's trembling hands refused their accustomed office, and made her take a glass of wine and water ere she suffered her to move towards the door. Amanda was astonished, as she approached it, to hear a violent noise, like the mingled sounds of laughing and singing; her soul recoiled at the tumult, and she asked



asked sister Mary, with a countenance of terror, "what it meant?" She replied, "It was only some friends and neighbours doing honour to the captain." Amanda hastily opened the door, anxious to terminate the suspense these words occasioned; but how great was her horror when she perceived a set of the meanest rustics assembled round the bed, with every appearance of inebriety, laughing, shouting and smoaking: What a savage scene for a child, whose heart was bursting with grief! She shrieked with horror, and flinging herself into the arms of sister Mary, conjured her to have the room cleared.

Sister Mary, from being accustomed to such scenes, felt neither horror nor disgust: She complied, however, with the request of Amanda, and besought them to depart, saying, "that Miss Fitzalen was a stranger to their customs, and besides, poor thing, quite beside herself with grief." They began to grumble at the proposal of removing, they had made preparations for spending a merry night, and Mrs. Brien said, "If she had thought things would have turned out in this way, the captain might have found some other place to die in—for the least one could have, after his giving them so much trouble, was a little enjoyment with one's neighbours at the latter end." Johnaten and

Kate, who were among the party, joined their entreaties to sister Mary's, and she, to tempt them to compliance, said, "That in all probability they would soon have another and a better opportunity for making merry than the present." They at length retired, and sister Mary and Amanda were left alone in the chamber of death. The dim light which remained cast a glimmering shade upon the face of Fitzalen, that added to its ghastliness, Amanda now indulged in all the luxury of grief, and found in sister Mary a truly sympathetic friend, for the good nun was famed throughout the little circle of her acquaintance for weeping with those that wept, and rejoicing with those that rejoiced. She obtained a promise from Amanda of accompanying her to St. Catherine's as soon as her father was interred; and in return for this she gave an assurance of continuing with her till the last melancholy offices were over, and also, that, with the assistance of Johnaten, she would see every thing proper provided, this was some comfort to Amanda, who felt herself at present unequal to any exertion; yet, notwithstanding her fatigue and illness, she persevered in her resolution of sitting up with her father every night, dreading that, if she retired to bed, a scene of riot would again ensue, which, in her opinion, was sacrilege to the dead.

She

She went to bed every morning, and was nursed with the most tender attention by sister Mary, who also insisted on being her companion at night. — This however was but a mere matter of form, for the good sister was totally unable to keep her eyes open, and slept as comfortably upon the earthen floor, with her gown made into a pillow for her head, as if laid upon down; then was poor Amanda left to her own reflections, and the melancholy contemplation of her beloved father's remains. The evening of the fourth day after his decease was fixed upon for his interment; with streaming eyes and a breaking heart, Amanda beheld him put into the coffin, and in that moment felt as if he had again died before her. — A small procession attended, consisting of the people of the house, Johnaten and Kate, and a few respectable farmers, to whom Fitzalen had endeared himself during his short abode at Castle-Carberry; the men had scarfs and hat-bands, and the women hoods.

Johnaten, who had been a soldier in his youth, resolved to pay him some military honour, and placed his hat and sword upon the coffin. Amanda, by the most painful efforts, supported the preparations for his removal; but when she saw the coffin actually raised to be taken out, she could no

longer restrain her feelings; she shrieked in the agony of her soul, a sickness, almost deadly, seized her, and she fell fainting upon sister Mary's bosom!

CHAP. II.

Oh! let me unlade my breast,
 Pour out the fulness of my soul before you,
 Shew every tender, every grateful thought,
 This wond'rous goodness stirs: But 'tis impossible,
 And utterance all is vile; since I can only
 Swear you reign here, but never tell how much.

ROWE.—*Fair Pen.*

SISTER MARY recovered her with difficulty, but found it impossible to remove her from the cabin till she was more composed. In about two hours its inhabitants returned, and the car having arrived, which she had ordered to convey Amanda to St. Catherine's, she was placed upon it

it in a state scarcely animate, and supported by sister Mary, was conveyed to that peaceful asylum.

On arriving at it she was carried immediately into the prioress's apartment, who received and welcomed her with the most tender affection and sensibility—a tenderness which roused Amanda from the stupefaction into which she appeared sinking, and made her weep violently. She felt relieved from doing so, and, as some return for the kindness she received, endeavoured to appear benefitted by it; she therefore declined going to bed, but lay down upon a little matted couch in the prioress's room, the tea table was close by it; as she refused any other refreshment, she obtained this by a promise of eating something with it, none of the sisterhood, sister Mary excepted, were admitted, and Amanda felt this delicate attention and respect to her sorrows with gratitude.

She arrived on the eve of their patron Saint at the convent, which was always celebrated with solemnity: After tea therefore the prioress and sister Mary were compelled to repair to the chapel, but she removed the reluctance they felt to leave her alone by complaining of being drowsy. A pillow being laid under her head by sister Mary soon after they quitted her, she fell into a profound slumber, in which she continued 'till awoke by

distant music, so soft, so clear, so harmonious, that the delightful sensations it gave her she could only compare to those which she imagined a distressed and pensive soul would feel, when springing from the shackles of mortality, it first heard the heavenly sounds that welcomed it to the realms of eternal bliss.

The chapel, from which those celestial sounds proceeded, was at the extremity of the house, so that they sometimes swelled upon her ear, sometimes faintly sunk upon it. The pauses in the organ, which was finely played, were filled up by the sweet, though less powerful, strains of the sisterhood, who sung a hymn in honour of their Saint.

No one was here exempt,
No voice but well could join melodious part.

'Tis a foretaste of Heaven, thought Amanda.
She heard a deep sigh behind her. She turned her head hastily, and perceived a figure standing near, which bore a strong resemblance to Lord Mortimer. She was alarmed—she could not believe it was him. The light, which the small and heavy arched window admitted, was imperfect, and she rose from the couch to be better assured it was or was not him;

him; a second glance convinced her; she might have believed her eyes at first.

Trembling and astonished she sunk upon a seat, exclaiming, "Gracious Heaven! what can have brought Lord Mortimer hither?"

He made no reply, but kneeling before her, took her hands in his, pressed them to his forehead and lips, and laid his head upon them.

"Why," cried Amanda, unutterably affected by the emotions he betrayed, "why, my Lord, are you come hither?"

"To try," he replied, in a voice scarcely articulate, "whether Miss Fitzalen will yet consider me as her friend."

"That, my Lord," said she, "depends upon circumstances; but while your Lordship remains in your present position, what they are I cannot explain."

Lord Mortimer instantly arose, and seated himself by her: "Now tell me," said he, "what those circumstances are."

"The first, my Lord, is to exculpate my father in the opinion of Lord Cherbury, and by declaring the commencement and progress of our acquaintance, eradicate from his Lordship's mind the injurious suspicions he entertained against him. —

This, perhaps, you will say is useless, considering

those suspicions can no longer wound him; but, my Lord, I deem it an incumbent duty on me to remove from his memory the obloquy on my account cast on it."

"I promise you, most solemnly," said Lord Mortimer, "you shall be obeyed. This is a debt of justice, which I had resolved to pay ere I received your injunction for doing so; it is but lately I heard of the unjust charges made against him, nor do I now know what fiend gave rise to them."

"The same, perhaps," exclaimed Amanda, "who spread such complicated snares for my destruction, and involved me in every horror but that which proceeds from conscious guilt. Oh! my Lord, the second circumstance I allude to is, if you should hear my name treated with scorn and contempt by those few, those very few, whom I had reason to esteem, and to believe, esteemed me, that you would kindly interpose in my justification, and say, I merited not the aspersions cast upon me. Believe me innocent, and you will easily persuade others I am so. You shake your head; as much as to say you cannot think me so after the proofs you have seen to the contrary. Ah! my Lord, those proofs were contrived by malice and treachery to ruin me in the estimation of my friends, and by perfidy

to force me into a crime, of which I already bear the appearance and the stigma. Surely in this solemn hour, which has seen my beloved father consigned to his kindred earth, when, with a mind harrassed by sorrow, and a body worn out with fatigue, I feel as if standing on the verge of the grave, I should be the most abandoned of wretches, if I could assert my innocence without the consciousness of really possessing it: No, my Lord, by such a falsehood I should be not only wicked, but foolish in depriving myself of that happiness hereafter, which will so fully recompense my present miseries."

"Oh! Amanda," cried Lord Mortimer, who had been walking backward and forward in an agitated manner while she spoke, "you would almost convince me against the evidence of my own senses."

"Almost," she repeated; "then I see, my Lord; you are determined still to disbelieve me, but why, since so prejudiced against me, have you come hither, was it merely to be assured of my wretchedness? To hear me say that I stand alone in the world, without one being interested about my welfare, that my present asylum is bestowed by charity, and that, if my life be prolonged, it must

be spent in struggling against constitution, sorrow, and ill fame, to procure a subsistence."

"No, no," exclaimed Lord Mortimer, flinging himself at her feet, "never shall you suffer such misery; no, were you even the being I was tempted to think you some time ago, never would Mortimer suffer the woman his heart doated on to feel such calamity. I do not, I cannot, believe you would deceive me. There is an irresistible eloquence in your words, that convinces me you have been the victim of treachery, and I its dupe. I cannot give you a more convincing proof of my confidence in you, than by again renewing my entreaties to have one fame, one fate, one fortune, ours."

The resolution which Amanda had forced to support her through the painful scene she guest would ensue the moment she saw Lord Mortimer, now vanished, and she burst into a flood of tears.

She saw his conduct in the most generous, the most exalted light, notwithstanding appearances were so much against her, he was willing to rely solely on her own asseveration of innocence, and to run every risque on her account; that by an union he might shelter her from the distresses of her present situation: But while her sensibility was affected by his expressions, her pride was alarmed.

alarmed lest he should impute her ardent desire of vindicating herself to an expectation of having his addresses renewed. In broken accents she endeavoured to remove such an idea if it had arisen, and to convince him that all further intimacy between them must now be terminated. Lord Mortimer ascribed the latter part of her speech to the resentment she felt against him for ever entertaining doubts of her worth. She desired him to rise, but he refused till he was forgiven. My forgiveness is your's indeed, my Lord, said she, though your suspicions wounded me to the soul; I can scarcely wonder at your entertaining them, when I reflect on the different situations in which I was found, which, if your Lordship can spare a little longer time, or deem it worth devoting to such a purpose, as well as I am able I will account for being involved in. — Lord Mortimer declared his ardent desire to hear those particulars, which nothing but a fear of fatiguing or agitating her could have prevented his before expressing. He then seated himself by her, and taking her cold and emaciated hand in his, listened to her little narrative.

She briefly informed him of her father's residing in Devonshire after the death of her mother, of the manner in which they became acquainted with

Colonel

Colonel Belgrave, of his having ingratiated himself into their friendship, by pretending to be Oscar's friend, and then plunging them in distress, when he found they not only resisted but resented his villainous designs.

She related the artful manner in which Lady Greystock had drawn her from her father's protection, and the cold and insolent reception she met from the Marchioness and her daughter, when introduced by the above-mentioned Lady, the enmity the Marchioness bore her father, the sudden alteration in her behaviour, the invitation to her house so unexpected and unnecessary, all tended to inspire a belief that she was concerned in contriving Col. Belgrave's admittance to the house, and had also given Lord Cherbury reason to suspect the integrity of her father.

Lord Mortimer here interrupted Amanda, to mention the conversation which passed between him and Mrs. Jane in the hall.

She raised her hands and eyes to Heaven with astonishment at such wickedness, and said, "Though she always suspected the girl's integrity, from a certain sycophant air, she never imagined she could be capable of such baseness."

Lord Mortimer again interrupted her, to mention what Lady Greystock had told him concerning
Mrs.

Mrs. Jennings, as also what the housekeeper had said of the note he gave her for Amanda.

“ Good God !” said Amanda, “ when I hear of all the enemies I had, I almost wonder I escaped so well.” She then resumed her narrative, accounted for the dislike Mrs. Jennings had to her, and explained the way in which she was entrapped into Col. Belgrave’s power, the almost miraculous manner in which she was freed from his house, the friendship she received from Howell, and the situation in which she arrived at Castle Carberry, and found her father. The closing scene she could not describe, for sighs and sobs impeded her utterance. Lord Mortimer gently folded her to his breast ; he called her his dear, his unfortunate, his lovely girl, more precious than ever to his heart, and declared he never again would quit her till she had given him a right to espouse her quarrels, and secure her from the machinations of her enemies. Her warm tears wet his cheek as she exclaimed “ that could never be.”

“ My promise is already past,” cried she ; “ that which was given to the living shall not be forfeited to the dead ; and this, my Lord, by design, is the last time we must ever meet.”

“ What

"What promise!" exclaimed Lord Mortimer: Surely no one could be so inhuman as to extort a promise from you to give me up."

"It was not inhumanity extorted it," replied Amanda; "but honour, rectitude, and discretion, without forfeiting those never can I violate it. — There is but one event could make me acquiesce in your wishes, that is, having a fortune adequate to yours to bring you, because then Lord Cherbury could ascribe no selfish motive to my conduct; but as such an event is utterly improbable, I might almost say impossible, it is certain we never shall be united. Any farther intercourse between us, you must therefore be convinced, would injure me. Disturb not therefore, my Lord, my retirement; but ere you depart, allow me to assure you, you have lightened the weight on my heart by crediting what I have said; should I not recover from the illness which now preys upon me, it will cheer my departing spirit to know you think me innocent; and, if I live, it will support me through many difficulties, and often, perhaps, after the toils of a busy day, shall I comfort myself by reflecting, that those I esteem, if they think of me, it is with their wonted regard."

Lord Mortimer was affected by the manner in which she spoke, his eyes began to glisten, and he
was

was again declaring he would not suffer her to sacrifice happiness at the shrine of a too scrupulous and romantic generosity, when the door opened, and the prioress and sister Mary (who had been detained in the chapel by a long discourse from the priest) entered, bearing lights.

Lord Mortimer started in much confusion, retreated to one of the windows, and drew out his handkerchief to conceal the emotions Amanda had excited. She was unable to speak to the prioress and sister Mary, who stared round them, and then at each other, not certain whether they should advance or retreat. Lord Mortimer in a few moments recovered his composure, and advancing to the prioress apologized for his intrusion into her apartment; but said he had the honour of being a friend of Miss Fitzalen's, and could not resist his wish of inquiring in person after her health as soon as he arrived in the country.

The prioress, who had once seen a good deal of the polite world, received his address with ease and complaisance. Sister Mary went over to Amanda, and found her weak, trembling and weeping. She expressed the utmost concern at seeing her in such a situation, and immediately procured her a glass of wine, which she insisted on her taking. The lights now gave Lord Mortimer an opportunity

opportunity of contemplating the depredations which grief and sickness had made upon her. — Her pale and fallow complexion, her heavy and sunken eyes, struck him with horror. He could not conceal his feelings. — “Gracious Heaven !” cried he, going to the couch, and taking her hand, “I fear you are very ill.”

She looked mournfully in his face without speaking ; but this look was sufficient to assure him he was not mistaken. The efforts she had made to converse with him, and the yet greater efforts she made to banish him for ever from her, quite exhausted her, after the various miseries she had gone through, how soothing to her soul would have been the attentions of Lord Mortimer, how pleasing, how delightful, the asylum she should have found in his arms ! But no temptation, no distress, she resolved should ever make her disobey the injunctions of her adored father.

“She is very bad indeed,” said sister Mary, “and we must get her to bed as soon as possible.”

“She requires rest and repose indeed,” said Lord Mortimer ; “but tell me, my dear Miss Fitzalan (taking her hand) if I have those good ladies permission for calling here to-morrow, will you, if able to rise, see me ?”

"I cannot indeed," said Amanda; "I have already declared this must be our last interview, and I shall not retract from what I have said."

"Then," exclaimed Lord Mortimer, regardless, or rather forgetful, of those who heard him, from the agitation and warmth of his feelings, "I shall, in one respect at least, accuse you of dissimulation, that of feigning a regard for me you never felt."

"Such an accusation is now of little consequence," replied Amanda; "perhaps you had better think it just."

"Cruel, inexorable girl, to refuse seeing me, to wish to have the anxiety which now preys upon my heart prolonged!"

"Young man," said the prioress, in an accent of displeasure, seeing the tears streaming down Amanda's cheeks, "respect her sorrows."

"Respect them, Madam," repeated he, "Oh! Heaven, I respect, I venerate them; but will you, my dear Lady, when Miss Fitzalan is able, prevail on her to communicate the particulars of our acquaintance; and will you then become my advocate, and persuade her to receive my visits?"

"Impossible, Sir," said the prioress, "I shall never attempt to desire a larger share of confidence from Miss Fitzalan than she desires to bestow upon me. From my knowledge of her I am convinced
her

her conduct will always be guided by discretion ; she has greatly obliged me by chusing this humble retreat for her residence ; she has put herself under my protection, and I shall endeavour to fulfil that sacred trust by securing her from any molestation."

" Well, Madam," said Lord Mortimer, " I flatter myself Miss Fitzalan will do me justice in declaring my visits proceeded from wishes which, though she may disappoint, she cannot disapprove. I shall no longer intrude upon your time or her's, but will still hope I shall find you both less inflexible."

He took up his hat, he approached the door ; but when he glanced at Amanda, he could not depart without speaking to her, and again went to the couch. He entreated her to compose and exert herself ; he desired her forgiveness for any warmth he had betrayed, and he whispered to her that all his earthly happiness depended on her restoration to health, and her becoming his. He insisted on her now giving him her hand as a pledge of amity between them. She complied ; but when presuming on this he again asked her consent to repeat his visits, he found her inexorable as ever, and retired, if not with a displeased, a disappointed countenance. Sister Mary attended him from the apartment. — At the door of the convent he requested her to

walk

walk a few paces from it with him, saying he wanted to speak to her. She consented, and remembering he was the person who frightened her one evening amongst the ruins, determined now, if she had a good opportunity, to ask what had then brought him thither?"

Lord Mortimer knew the poverty of the convent, and feared Amanda might want many things, or its inhabitants be distressed to procure them for her; he therefore pulled out a purse, and presenting it to sister Mary, requested she would apply it for Miss Fitzalan's use, without mentioning any thing about it to her.

Sister Mary took the purse: "Oh! Jesu Maria, (exclaimed she) how heavy it is!"

Lord Mortimer was retiring, when catching hold of him, she cried, "Stay, stay, I have a word or two to say to you: I wonder how much there is in this purse?"

Lord Mortimer smiled.—"If not enough for the present emergencies (said he) it shall soon be replenished."

Sister Mary sat down upon a tomb-stone, and very deliberately counted the money into her lap.

"Oh! mercy (said she) I never saw so many guineas together before in all my life!"

Again

Again Lord Mortimer smiled, and was retiring; but again stopping him, she returned the gold into the purse, and declared "she neither would or durst keep it."

Lord Mortimer was provoked at this declaration, and, without replying to it, walked on. — She ran nimbly after him, and dropping the purse at his feet, was out of sight in a moment.

When she returned to the prioress's apartment she related the incident, and took much merit to herself; for acting so prudently, the prioress commended her very much, and poor Amanda, with a faint voice, said she had acted quite right.

A little room, inside the prioress's chamber, was prepared for Amanda, into which she was now conveyed, and the good-natured sister Mary brought her own bed, and laid it beside her's.

CHAP. III.

"With dirges due, and sad array,
Slow through the church-way path I saw him borne."

IT will now be necessary to account for the sudden appearance of Lord Mortimer at the convent. Our reader may recollect, that we left him in London in the deepest affliction for the supposed perfidy of Amanda—an affliction which knew no diminution from time, neither the tenderness of his aunt, Lady Martha Dormer, or the kind consideration his father shewed for him, who for the present ceased to importune him about Lady Euphrasia, could have any lenient effect upon him; he pined in thought, and felt a distaste to all society; he at last began to think, that, though Amanda had been unhappily led astray, she might ere this have repented of her error, and forsaken Col. Belgrave;

to

to know whether she had done so, or whether she could be prevailed upon to give him up, he believed would be an alleviation of his sorrows. — No sooner had he persuaded himself of this, than he determined on going to Ireland without delay, to visit Captain Fitzalan, and if she was not returned to his protection, advise with him about some method of restoring her to it.

He told Lord Cherbury he thought an excursion into Wales would be of service to him. His Lordship agreed in thinking it might, and secretly delighted that all danger relative to Amanda was over, gladly concurred in whatever could please his son, flattering himself, that on his return to London he would no longer raise any objections to an alliance with the fair Scotch heiress.

Lord Mortimer travelled with as much expedition to Holyhead, as if certain that perfect happiness, not a small alleviation of misery would be the recompense of his journey, he concealed from his aunt the real motives which actuated him to it, blushing, even to himself, at the weakness which he still felt relative to Amanda.

When he crossed the water he again set off post, attended on horseback only by his own man; within one mile of Castle Carberry he met the little mournful procession approaching, which was attending

attending poor Fitzalan to his last home. The carriage stopped to let them pass, and in the last of the group he perceived Johnaten, who at the same moment recognized him. Johnaten, with much surprise in his countenance, stepped up to the carriage, and, after bowing, and humbly hoping his Lordship was well, with a melancholy shake of his head, informed him whose remains he was following.

"Captain Fitzalan dead!" repeated Lord Mortimer, with a face as pale as death, and a faltering voice, while his heart sunk within him at the idea that his father was in some degree accessory to the fatal event; for just before he left London Lord Cherbury had informed him of the letter he wrote to Fitzalan, and this he believed, joined to his own immediate family misfortunes, had precipitated him from the world. — "Captain Fitzalan dead!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, an please you my Lord," said Johnaten, wiping away a tear, "and he has not left a better or braver man behind him. Poor gentleman, the world pressed hard upon him."

"Had he no tender friend about him?" asked Lord Mortimer. "Were neither of his children with him?"

“ Oh ! yes, my Lord, poor Miss Amanda.

“ She was with him !” said Lord Mortimer, in an eager accent.

“ Yes, my Lord, she returned here about ten days ago, but so sadly altered, I think she won’t stay long behind him: Poor thing, she is going fast indeed, and the more’s the pity, for she is a sweet creature.”

Lord Mortimer was inexpressibly shocked ; he wished to hide his emotions, and waved his hand to Johnaten to depart ; but Johnaten either did not, or would not, understand the motion, and he was obliged, in broken accents, to say, “ he would no longer detain him.”

The return of Amanda was to him a conviction that she had seen her error in its true light ; he pictured to himself the affecting scene which must have ensued between a dying father and a penitent daughter, so loved, so valued, as was Amanda. — Her situation, when she received his forgiveness and benediction, he represented her to himself as at once bewailing the loss of her father, and her offences, endeavouring, by prayers, by tears, by sighs, to obliterate them in the sight of Heaven, and render herself fit to receive its awful fiat.

He heard she was dying ; his soul recoiled at the idea of seeing her shrouded in her native clay, and yet

yet he could not help believing this the only peaceful asylum she could find, to be freed from the shafts of contempt and malice of the world.—He trembled, lest he should not behold the lovely penitent while she was capable of observing him; to receive a last adieu, though dreadful, would yet, he thought, lighten the horrors of an eternal separation, and, perhaps too, it would be some comfort to her departing spirit to know from him he had pardoned her, and conscious surely, he thought to himself, she must be of needing pardon from him, whom she had so long imposed on by a specious pretext of virtue. He had heard from Lord Cherbury, that Capt. Fitzalan had quitted the Castle; he knew not therefore at present where to find Amanda, nor did he chuse to make any inquiries 'till he again saw Johnaten.

As soon as the procession was out of sight he alighted from the carriage, and ordering his man to discharge it, on arriving at Castle Carberry, he took a path across the fields, which brought him to the side of the church-yard where Fitzalan was to be interred.

He reached it just as the coffin was lowering into the earth, a yew tree growing by the wall against which he leaned, hid him from observation. He heard many of the rustics mentioning the

merits of the deceased in terms of warm, though artless, commendation, and he saw Johnaten receiving the hat and sword (which, as military trophies, he had laid upon the coffin) with a flood of tears.

When the church-yard was cleared, he stepped across the broken wall to the silent mansion of Fitzalan; the scene was wild and dreary, and a lowring evening seemed in unison with the sad objects around. Lord Mortimer was sunk in the deepest despondence; he felt awfully convinced of the instability of human attainments, and the vanity of human pursuits, not only from the ceremony he had just witnessed, but his own situation; the fond hopes of his heart, the gay expectations of his youth, and the hilarity of his soul, were blasted—never, he feared, to revive. Virtue, rank and fortune, advantages so highly prized by mankind, were unable to give him comfort, to remove the malady of his heart, to administer one obli-vious antidote to a mind diseased.

“Peace to thy shade, thou unfortunate soldier,” exclaimed he, after standing some time by the grave with folded arms: “Peace to thy shade—peace which shall reward thee for a life of toil and trouble; happy should I have deemed myself, had it been my lot to have lightened thy grief, or cheered thy

thy closing hours ; but those who were dearer to thee than existence I may yet serve, and thus make the only atonement now in my power for the injustice I fear was done thee ; thy Amanda, and thy gallant son, shall be my care, and his path, I trust it will be in my power, to smooth through life."

A tear fell from Lord Mortimer upon the grave, and he turned mournfully from it towards Castle Carberry. Here Johnaten was arrived before him, and had already a large fire lighted in the dressing room poor Amanda, on coming to the castle, had chosen for herself. Johnaten fixed on this for Lord Mortimer, as the parlours had been shut up ever since Captain Fitzalan's departure, and could not be put in any order till the next day ; but it was the worst place Lord Mortimer could have entered, as not only itself but every thing in it reminded him of Amanda, and the grief it excited at his first entrance was so violent as to alarm not only his man (who was spreading a table with refreshments) but Johnaten, who was assisting him. He soon checked it, however ; but when he again looked round the room, and beheld it ornamented with works done by Amanda, he could scarcely prevent another burst of grief, as violent as the first.

He now learned Amanda's residence, and so great was his impatience to see her, that, apprehensive the convent would soon be closed, he set off, fatigued as he was, without recruiting himself with any refreshment.

He intended to ask for one of the Ladies of St. Catherine's, and entreat her, if Amanda was then in a situation to be seen, to announce his arrival to her; but after rapping repeatedly with a rattan against the door, the only person who appeared to him was a servant girl. From her he learned the Ladies were all in the chapel, and that Miss Fitzalan was in the prioress's apartment. He asked, "Was she too ill to be seen?" The girl replied, "No; for having only entered the room to leave the kettle in it, at a time when Amanda was composed, she imagined she was very well."

Lord Mortimer then told her his name, and desired her to go up to Miss Fitzalan and inquire whether she would see him. The girl attempted not to move; she was in reality so struck of a heap, by hearing that she had been talking to a Lord, that she knew not whether she was standing on her head or her heels. Lord Mortimer imputing her silence to disinclination to comply with his request, put a guinea into her hand, and entreated her to be expeditious. This restored her to animation;

mation ; but ere she reached the room she forgot his title, and being ashamed to deliver a blundering message to Miss Fitzalan, or to appear stupid to Lord Mortimer, she returned to him, pretending she had delivered his message, and that he might go up. She shewed him the door, and when he entered he imputed the silence of Amanda, and her not moving, to the effects of her grief, he advanced to the couch, and was not a little shocked on seeing her eyes closed ; concluding from this that she had fainted, but her easy respiration soon convinced him that this was a mistake, and he immediately concluded that the girl had deceived him. He leaned over her till she began to stir, and then retreated behind her, lest his presence, on her first awaking, should alarm her.

What took place in the interview between them has already been related, notwithstanding appearances were so much against her, and no explanation had ensued relative to them ; from the moment she asserted her innocence with solemnity he could no longer doubt it, and yielding at once to its conviction, to his love, to his pity for her, he again renewed his overtures for an union. Hearing of the stratagems laid for her destruction, the dangers she had escaped, the distresses she had experienced, made him more anxious than ever for

completing it; that by his constant protection he might secure her from similar trials, and by his tenderness and care restore her to health, peace, and happiness. He longed for the period of her triumphing over the perfidious Marchioness, and the detestable Lady Euphrasia, by being raised to that station they had so long attempted to prevent her attaining, and thus proving to them that virtue sooner or later, will counteract the designs of vice. He felt a degree of rapture at the idea of his being no longer obliged to regret the ardent, the unabated affection he felt for her.

His transports were somewhat checked when she solemnly declared an union between them impossible, and forbade his seeing her again. He was piqued by the steadiness with which she repeated this resolution; but her present weak state prevented his betraying any resentment, and he flattered himself he would be able to conquer her obstinacy; he could not now indeed despair of any event after the unexpected restoration of Amanda to his esteem, and the revival of those hopes of felicity, which in the certainty of having lost her had faded away.

He returned, as Johnaten said, an altered man to the Castle; he no longer experienced horror at
entering

entering the dressing room, which displayed so many vestiges of his Amanda's taste.

He resolved on an immediate union, as the surest proof he could give her of his perfect confidence in her sincerity, not allowing himself to suppose she would continue firm in the resolution she had recently avowed to him. He then intended setting off for London, and sparing neither time, trouble, or expence, to obtain from the inferior agents in the plot laid against her, a full avowal of the part they had themselves acted in it, and all they knew relative to those performed by others. This was not designed for his own satisfaction, he wanted no confirmation of what Amanda asserted, as his meaning to marry her immediately demonstrated, it was to cover with confusion those who had meditated her destruction, and add to the horrors they would experience when they found her emerging from obscurity, not as Miss Fitzalan, but Lady Mortimer. — Such proofs of her innocence would also prevent malice from saying he was the dupe of art, and he was convinced, for both their sakes, it was requisite to procure them; he would then avow his marriage, return for his wife, introduce her to his friends, and, if his father kept up any relentment against them longer than he expected, he

knew, in Lady Martha Dormer's house, and at Tudor Hall, he would find not only an eligible, but pleasant residence. Those delightful schemes kept him awake half the night, and when he fell asleep it was only to dream of happiness and Amanda.

In the morning, notwithstanding the prohibition he had received to the contrary, he went to inquire how she was, and to try and see her. The girl, who had answered his repeated knocks the preceding evening, appeared, and told him Miss Fitzalan was very bad. He began to think that this must be a pretext to avoid seeing him, and to come at the truth was slipping a bribe into her hand, when sister Mary, who had been watching them from an adjoining room, appeared, and stopped this measure. She repeated what the girl had just said, and, in addition to it, declared that, even if Miss Fitzalan was up, she would not see him, and that he must come no more to St. Catherine's, as both Miss Fitzalan and the prioress would resent such conduct exceedingly, and that, if he wanted to inquire after the health of the former, he might easily send a servant, and it would be much better done than to come frisking over there every moment.

Lord

Lord Mortimer was seriously displeased with this unceremonious speech. — “So, I suppose,” cried he, “you want to make a real nun of Miss Fitzalan, and to keep her from all conversation.”

“And a happy creature she would be were she to become one of us,” replied sister Mary, “and as to keeping her from conversation, she might have as much as she pleased with any one.— Indeed I believe the poor thing likes you well enough, the more’s her misfortune for doing so.”

“I thank you, Madam,” cried Lord Mortimer; “I suppose it is one of your vows to speak truth; if so, I must acknowledge you keep it religiously.”

“I have just heard her,” proceeded sister Mary, without minding what he had said, “tell the prioress a long story about you and herself, by which I find it was her father’s desire she should have nothing more to say to you, and I dare say the poor gentleman had good reasons for doing so. I beg, my Lord, you will come no more here, and, indeed, I think it was a shame for you to give money to the simpleton who answered you. Why, it was enough to turn the girl’s head, and set her mad after one fal lal or other.”

Lord Mortimer could not depart without an effort to win sister Mary over to his favour, and engage her to try and persuade Miss Fitzalan to

permit his visits, but she was inflexible ; he then entreated to know if Amanda was so ill as to be unable to rise ? She assured him she was, and, as some little consolation to the distress she perceived this assurance gave him, said he might send when he pleased to inquire after her health, and she would take care to answer the messenger herself.

Lord Mortimer began now to be seriously alarmed, lest Capt. Fitzalan had prevailed on his daughter to make a solemn renunciation of him ; if this was the case he knew nothing could prevail on her to break her promise. He was half-distracted with doubt and anxiety, which were scarcely supportable, when he reflected that they could not for some time be satisfied, since, even if he wrote to her for that purpose, she could not at present be able to answer his letter ; again he felt convinced of the instability of earthly happiness, and the close connexion there has ever been between pleasure and pain.

CHAP. III.

"Thy presence only 'tis can make me blest'd,
Heal my unquiet mind, and tune my soul."

OTWAY'S ORPH.

THE fatigue, distress and agitation of Amanda could no longer be struggled with; she sunk beneath their violence, and for a week was confined to her bed by the fever which seized her in England, and had ever since lurked in her veins. — The whole sisterhood, who took it in turn to attend her, vied with each other in kindness and care to the poor invalid. Their efforts for her recovery were aided by a skilful physician from the next town, who called without being sent for at the convent. He said he had known Capt. Fitzalan, and that hearing Miss Fitzalan was indisposed, he had come in hopes he might be of service to the daughter.

daughter of a man he so much esteemed. He would accept of no fee, and the prioress, who was a woman of sagacity, suspected, as well as Amanda, that he came by the direction of Lord Mortimer; nor were they mistaken, for distracted with apprehensions about her, he had taken this method of lightening his fears, flattering himself by the excellent advice he had procured, her recovery would be much expedited, and of course his suspense at least terminated. The doctor did not withdraw his visits when Amanda was able to rise, he attended her punctually, and often paid her long visits, which were of infinite service to her spirits, as he was a man of much information and cheerfulness. In a few days she was removed from her chamber into a pleasant room below stairs, which opened into the garden, where, leaning on the friendly doctor's arm, or one of the nun's, she walked at different times a few minutes each day. Lord Mortimer, on hearing this, thought he might now solicit an interview, and accordingly wrote for that purpose.

TO MISS FITZALAN.

“ Lord Mortimer presents his compliments to Miss Fitzalan, flatters himself she will allow him personally

personally to express the sincere happiness her restoration to health has afforded him. He cannot think she will refuse so reasonable a request ;— he is almost convinced, she would not hesitate a moment in granting it. Could she form an idea of the misery he has experienced on her account, and the anxiety he feels, and must continue to feel, till some expressions in the last interview are explained.”

Castle Carberry,

10th May.

This letter greatly distressed Amanda. She had hoped the pain of again rejecting his visits and requests would have been spared her. She guessed at the expressions he alluded to in his letter, they were those she had dropped relative to her promise to her father, and from the impetuous and tender feelings of Lord Mortimer, she easily conceived the agony he would experience when he found this promise inviolable, she felt more for his distress than her own ; her heart, seasoned in the school of adversity, could bear its sorrows with calmness ; but this was not his case, and she paid the tribute of tears to a love so fervent, so faithful, and so hopeless.

She then requested sister Mary to acquaint his messenger that she received no visits ; that, as she

was tolerably recovered, she entreated his Lordship would not take the trouble of continuing his inquiries about her health, or to send her any more written messages, as she was unable to answer them. The prioress, who was present when she received the letter, commended her exceedingly for the fortitude and discretion she had manifested. Amanda had deemed it necessary to inform her, after the conversation she heard between her and Lord Mortimer, of the terms on which they stood with each other, and the prioress, who doubted whether his Lordship was in reality as honourable as he professed himself, thought Amanda on the sure side in declining his visits.

The next morning the doctor called as usual. — He told Amanda he had brought her an entertaining book, for no such thing could be procured at St. Catherine's, and as she had expressed her regret at this, from the time she had been able to read, he had supplied her from his library, which was extensive and well chosen.

He did not present it to her 'till he was retiring, and then said, with a significant smile, she would find it contained something worthy of her particular attention. Amanda was alone, and immediately opened it. Great was her astonishment when a letter dropped from it into her lap! She snatched it

it up, and perceiving the directions in Lord Mortimer's hand, she hesitated whether she should open a letter conveyed in this manner; but to return it unopened was surely a slight Lord Mortimer merited not, and she broke the seal with a trembling hand and a palpitating heart.

Unkind Amanda, to compel me to use strata-gems in writing to you, and destroy the delightful hopes which had sprung in my soul, at the prospect at being about to receive a reward for my sufferings. Am I ever to be involved in doubts and perplexity on your account? Am I ever to see difficulty succeeded by difficulty, and hope by disappointment?

You must be sensible of the anxiety I shall feel until your ambiguous expressions are fully explained, and yet you refuse this explanation! But you have no pity for my feelings. Would it not be more generous in you to permit an interview than to keep me in suspense? To know the worst is some degree of ease; besides I should then have an opportunity of perhaps convincing you, that virtue, unlike vice, has its bounds, and that we may sometimes carry our notions of honour and generosity too far, and sacrifice our real happiness to chimerical ideas of them. Surely I shall not be too presumptuous in saying, that, if the regard
Amanda

Amanda once flattered me with is undiminished, she will, by rejecting an union with me, leave me not the only sufferer.

Oh! do not, my dear and too scrupulous girl, think a moment longer of persevering in a resolution so prejudicial to your welfare. Your situation requires particular protection; young, innocent and beautiful, already the object of licentious pursuits, your nearest relations, your greatest enemies, your brother, from his unsettled line of life, unable to be near you. Oh! my Amanda, from such a situation what evils may accrue? Avoid them, by taking refuge in his arms, who will be to you a tender friend, and faithful guardian, before such evils, the obligations for keeping a promise to reject me fade away, particularly when the motives which led to such a promise are considered. Capt. Fitzalan, hurt by the unfortunate letter he received from my father, extended his resentment to his son, and called upon you, without reflecting on the consequences of such a measure, to give me up. This is the only reason I can conceive for his desiring such a promise, and had I but arrived while he could have listened to my arguments, I am firmly convinced, instead of opposing, he would have sanctioned our union, and given his beloved girl to a man, who in every instance, would study

to

to evince his gratitude for such a gift, and to supply his loss.

Happiness, my dear Amanda, is in long arrears with us. She is now ready to make up for past deficiencies, if it is not our own faults; let us not frighten her from performing her good intentions, but hand in hand receive the lovely and long absent guest to our bosoms.

You will not, cannot, must not, be inflexible; I shall expect, as soon as you read this, a summons to St. Catherine's, to receive the ratification of my hopes; in every thing respecting our union I will be guided by you, except delaying it; what we have both suffered already from deceit makes me doubly anxious to secure you mine, lest another vile scheme should be formed to effect our separation.

Oh! Amanda, the faintest prospect of calling you mine, gives to my heart a felicity no language can express. Refuse not being mine, except you bring me an addition of fortune; already rich in every virtue, I shall, in obtaining you, obtain a treasure, which the wealthiest, the proudest, and the vainest of the sons of men may envy me the possession of, and which the good, the sensible, and the elegant, must esteem the kindest gift indulgent Heaven could bestow on me. Banish all uneasy doubts

doubts and scruples, my Amanda, from your mind, nor think a promise, which was demanded without reflecting on the consequences that must attend it can be binding, the ingenuous soul of your father would have cancelled it in a moment, had those consequences been represented to him, and now, when our own reason convinces us of them, I make no doubt, if departed souls are permitted to view the transactions of this world, his spirit would behold our union with approbation. Yes, my Amanda, I repeat your father's approving spirit will smile upon an act which gives to his lovely and beloved orphan a faithful friend, and steady protector, in her adoring

Castle Carberry,
11th May.

MORTIMER."

This letter deeply affected the sensibility, but could not shake the resolution of Amanda. She would not have answered it, as she considered any correspondence an infringement on the promises she had given her father to decline any further intimacy with him; but from the warmth and agitation displayed in his letter, it was evident to her that, if he did not receive an immediate answer to it, he would come to St. Catherine's, and insist

on

on seeing her; and she felt assured, that she would much better deliver her sentiments upon paper than to him; she accordingly wrote as follows:

TO LORD MORTIMER.

MY LORD,

“ You cannot change my resolution; surely, when I solemnly declare to you it is unalterable, you will spare me any further importunity on so painful a subject. In vain, my Lord, would you, by sophistry, cloaked with tenderness for that purpose, try to influence me. The arguments you have made use of, I am convinced, you never would have adopted, had you not been mistaken in regard to those motives which prompted my father to ask a promise from me of declining any farther connexion with you: It was not from resentment, my Lord, No, his death was then fast approaching, and he in charity with all mankind, forgave those who had wounded him by unjust reproach and accusation; it was a proper respect for his own character, and not resentment which influenced his conduct, as he was convinced, if I consented to an alliance with you, Lord Cherbury would be confirmed in all the suspicions he entertained of

his

his having entangled you with me, and consequently load his memory with contempt; tenderness also for me actuated him; he was acquainted with the proud heart of Lord Cherbury, and knew that if, poor and reduced as I was, I entered his family, I should be considered and treated as a mean intruder. So thoroughly am I convinced that he did not err in this idea, that, whenever reason is predominant in my mind, I think, even if a promise did not exist for such a purpose, I should decline your addresses; for, though I could submit with cheerfulness to many inconveniencies for your sake, I never could support indignities. We must part, my Lord, Providence has appointed different paths for us to pursue in life; yours smooth and flowery, if by useless regrets you do not frustrate the intentions of the benevolent donor; mine rough and thorny; but both, though so different, will lead to the same goal, where we shall again meet to be no more separated.

“Let not your Lordship deem me either unkind or ungrateful; my heart disavows the justice of such accusations, and is but too sensible of your tenderness and generosity. Yes, my Lord, I will confess, that no pangs can be more pungent than the ones which now rend it, at being obliged to act against its feelings; but the greater the sacrifice,
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the greater the merit of submitting to it, and a ray of self-approbation is perhaps the only sunshine of the soul which will brighten my future days.

“Never, my Lord, should I enjoy this, if my promise to my father was violated; there is but one circumstance which could set it aside, that is, having a fortune, that even Lord Cherbury might deem equivalent to your own to bring you; for then my father has often said he would approve our union; but this is amongst the improbabilities of this life, and we must endeavour to reconcile ourselves to the destiny which separates us.

“I hope your Lordship will not attempt to see me again; you must be sensible that your visits would be highly injurious to me, even the holy and solitary asylum which I have found would not protect me from the malice which has already been so busy with my peace and fame. Alas! I now need the utmost vigilance, deprived as I am of those on whom I had claims of protection, it behoves me to exert the utmost circumspection in my conduct, he in whom I expected to have found a guardian, Oscar, my dear unfortunate brother, is gone I know not whither, persecuted and afflicted by the perfidious monster who has been such a source of misery to me. Oh! my Lord, when I
think

think what his sufferings may now be, my heart sinks within me: Oh! had I been the only sufferer, I should not have felt so great a degree of agony as I now endure; but I will not despair about my dear Oscar; the Providence which has been so kind to his sister, which so unexpectedly raised her friends, at the moment she deemed herself deprived of all earthly comfort, may to him have been equally merciful. I have trespassed a long time upon your Lordship's attention, but I wished to be explicit, to avoid the necessity of any further correspondence between us; you now know my resolves: You also know my feelings; in pity to them spare me any further conflicts. May the tranquil happiness you so truly deserve soon be yours. Do not, my Lord, because disappointed in one wish, lose your sense of the many valuable blessings with which you are surrounded, in fulfilling the claims which your friends, your country have upon you, will shew how truly you merit those blessings, and banish all useless regrets from your heart. Adieu, my Lord, suffer no uneasiness on my account; if Heaven prolongs my life, I have no doubt but I shall find a little comfortable shelter from the world, where conscious I have acted according to my principles of right, I shall enjoy

enjoy the serenity which ever attends self-approbation—a serenity which no changes or chances in this life will, I trust, ever wrest from

May 12th,
St. Catherine's.

AMANDA FITZALAN."

She dispatched this by an old man, who was employed in the garden at St. Catherine's; but her spirits were so much affected by writing it, she was obliged to go up and lay on the bed. She considered herself as having taken a final adieu of Lord Mortimer, and the idea was too painful to be supported with fortitude; tender and fervent as his attachment was now to her, she believed the hurry and bustle of the world, in which he must be engaged, would soon eradicate it; a transfer of his affections, to one equal to himself in rank and fortune, was a probable event, and of course a total expulsion of her from his memory would follow; a deadly coldness stole upon her heart at the idea of being forgotten by him, and produced a flood of tears. She then began to accuse herself of inconsistency: She had often thought, if Lord Mortimer was restored to happiness, she should feel more tranquil; and now, when the means of effecting this restoration occurred, she

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trembled

trembled and lamented as if it would increase her misery. "I am selfish," said she to herself, "in desiring the prolongation of an affection, which must ever be hopeless, I am weak in regretting the probability of its transfer, as I can never return it."

To conquer those feelings, she found she must banish Lord Mortimer from her thoughts; except she succeeded in some degree in this, she felt she never should be able to exert the fortitude her present situation demanded. She now saw a probability of her existence being prolonged, and the bread of idleness, or dependence, could never be sweet to Amanda Fitzalan.

She had lain about an hour on the bed, and was about rising, and returning to the parlour, when sister Mary entered the chamber, and delivered her a letter. Ere Amanda looked at the superscription, her agitated heart foretold her whom it came from. She was not mistaken in her conjecture, but as she held it in her hand, she hesitated whether she should open it or not; yet, said she to herself, it can be no great harm, he cannot, after what I have declared, suppose my resolution to be shaken. He writes to assure me of his perfect acquiescence to it. Sister Mary left her at
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the instant her deliberations ended, by opening the letter.

TO MISS FITZALAN.

“ Inexorable Amanda ! but I will spare both you and myself the pain of farther importunity ; all I now request is, that for three months longer at least you will continue at St. Catherine’s, or that, if you find a much longer residence there unpleasant,, you will, on quitting it, leave directions where to be found ; ere half the above-mentioned period be elapsed, I trust, I shall be able satisfactorily to account for such a request. I am quitting Castle Carberry immediately ; I shall leave it with a degree of tranquillity that would perhaps surprise you, after what has so lately passed, if in this one instance you will oblige your,

Ever faithful,

MORTIMER.”

This laconic letter astonished Amanda. By its stile it was evident Lord Mortimer had recovered his cheerfulness, recovered it not from a determination of giving her up, but from a hope of their again meeting, as they could both wish.

A sudden transport rushed upon her heart at such an idea, but quickly died away when she reflected it was almost beyond the possibility of things to bring about a pleasing interview between them. She knew Lord Mortimer had a sanguine temper, and though it might mislead him, she resolved it should not mislead her. She could not form the most distant surmise of what he had now in agitation ; but whatever it was, she firmly believed, it would end in disappointment. To refuse every request of his was painful, but propriety demanded she should not accede to the last ; for one step she wisely considered, from the line of prudence, she had marked out for herself to take, might plunge her in difficulties from which she would find it impossible to extricate herself. With an unsteady hand she returned the following answer :

TO LORD MORTIMER.

“ MY LORD,

“ I cannot comply with your request ; you may, if you please, repeat inexorable Amanda : I had rather incur the imputation of obstinacy than imprudence, and think it much better to meet your accusation than deserve my own. How long I
may

may reside at St. Catherine's, is to myself unknown; when I quit it, I certainly will not promise to leave any directions where you may find me.

"The obstacles, which have rendered our separation necessary, are, I am convinced, beyond your Lordship's power to conquer, except they were removed, any farther interviews between us would be foolish and imprudent in the extreme. I rejoice to hear you are leaving the castle: I also rejoice, but am not surprised, to hear of your tranquillity. From your good sense I expected you would make exertions against useless regrets, and those exertions I knew would be attended with success; but, as some return for the sincere pleasure I feel for your restoration to tranquillity, seek not to disturb again that of

May 12th,
St. Catherine's.

AMANDA FITZALEN."

Scarcely had she sealed this letter when she was called to dinner; but, though she obeyed the summons, she could not eat; the exertions her writing to Lord Mortimer required, and the agitation his letter had thrown her into, quite exhausted her strength and spirits. The nuns withdrew soon after dinner, and left her alone with

the prioress. In a few minutes after their departure, the old gardener returned from Castle-Carberry, where he had been delivering her letter.— After informing her he had put it safely into his Lordship's hands, he added, with a look which seemed to indicate a fear lest she should be distressed, that he had received neither letter or message from him, though he waited a long time in expectation of receiving either one or the other; but he supposed, he said, his Lordship was in too great a hurry just then to give any answer, as a chaise and four was waiting to carry him to Dublin.

Amanda burst into tears as the man retired from the room. She saw she had written to Lord Montimer for the last time, and she could not suppress this tribute of regret. She was firmly convinced indeed she should behold him no more. — The idea of visiting her she was sure, nay she hoped, he would relinquish, when he found, which she supposed would soon be the case, the schemes or hopes which now buoyed up his spirits impossible to be realized.

The prioress sympathized in her sorrow, though not from her own experience, yet, from the experience of others, she knew how dangerous and bewitching a creature man is, and how difficult it is to remove the chains which he twines around
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the female heart, to remove those which lay so heavy upon the delicate and susceptible heart of her young friend, without leaving a corrosive wound, was her sincere wish, and by strengthening her resolution, she hoped success would crown their endeavours.

Two hours were elapsed since her messenger's return from the castle, when sister Mary entered the room with a large packet, which she put into Amanda's hands, saying, it was given her by Lord Mortimer's servant, who rode off the moment he delivered it.

Sister Mary made no scruple of saying, she should like to know what such a weighty packet contained. The prioress, chid her in a laughing manner for her curiosity, and drew her into the garden, to give Amanda an opportunity of examining the contents.

She was surprised, on breaking the seal, to perceive a very handsome pocket book in a blank cover, and found, unsealed, a letter to this effect :

TO MISS FITZALAN.

" I have put it out of your power to return this, by departing long ere you receive it. Surely, if you have the laudable pride you profess, you

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will

will not hesitate to use the contents of the pocket-book, as the only means of avoiding a weight of obligations from strangers ; though discarded as a lover, surely I may be esteemed as a friend, and with such a title I will be contented. till I can lay claim to a tenderer one. You start at this last expression, and I have no doubt you will call me a romantic visionary, for entertaining hopes which you have so positively assured me can never be realized ; but ere I resign them I must have something more powerful than this assurance, my sweet Amanda, to convince me of their fallacy. I was inexpressibly shocked this morning to learn by your letter, that your brother had met with misfortune. My blood boils with indignation against the monster who has, to use your emphatical expression, been such a source of misery to you both. I shall make it my particular care to try and discover the place to which Mr. Fitzalan is gone, and in what situation, by means of the agents, or some of the officers belonging to the regiment, I flatter myself with being able to gain some intelligence of him ; I need not add, that, to the utmost extent of my power, I will serve him. My success in this affair, as well as in that which concerns a much dearer Being, you may be convinced you shall soon hear. Adieu, my Amanda, I cannot say, like Hamlet,
" Go,

“Go, get you to a nunnery;” but I can say —
“Stay there, I charge you.” Seriously I could wish, except you find your present situation very unpleasant and inconvenient, not to change it for a short time. I think, for a temporary abode, you could not find a more eligible one, and, as I shall be all impatience when I return to Ireland to see you, a search after you would be truly insupportable. You have already refused to inform me of your determination relative to this matter; surely I may venture to request it may be as I wish, when I assure you, that, except I can see you in a manner pleasing to both, I never will force into your presence him, who, let things turn out as they may, must ever continue,

Your faithful,

MORTIMER.”

“Gracious Heaven!” said Amanda to herself, “what can he mean? What scheme can he have in agitation which will remove the obstacles to our union? He here seems to speak of a certainty of success. Oh! grant, Merciful Power!” she continued, raising her meek eyes to Heaven, while a rosy blush stole upon her cheeks, “grant that in-

deed he may be successful. He talks of returning to Ireland: "Still, proceeded she, reading over the letter, of requiring something more powerful than my assurance to convince him of the fallacy of his hopes; "surely Lord Mortimer would not be so cruel as to raise expectations in my bosom, without those in his own were well founded. — No, dear Mortimer, I will not call you a romantic visionary, but the most amiable, the most generous of men, who for poor Amanda encounters difficulties, and sacrifices every splendid expectation." She rejoiced at the intention he had declared of seeking out Oscar. She looked forward either to a speedy interview, or speedy intelligence of this beloved brother, as she knew Lord Mortimer would seek him with the persevering spirit of benevolence, and leave no means untried to restore him to her.

She now examined the contents of the pocket-book; it contained a number of small bills, to the amount of two hundred pounds—a large present, but one so delicately presented, that even her ideas of propriety could scarcely raise a scruple against her accepting it: They did, however, suggest one, uncertain how matters would yet terminate between her and Lord Mortimer, she was unwilling to receive pecuniary obligations from him; but
when

when she reflected on his noble and feeling heart, she knew she should severely wound it, by returning his present, she therefore resolved on keeping it, making a kind of compromise with her feelings about the matter, by determining that, except entitled to receive them, she would never more accept favours of this nature from his Lordship.

The present one indeed was a most seasonable relief, and removed from her heart a load of anxiety which had weighed on it. After paying her father's funeral expences, the people with whom he lodged, and the apothecary who had attended him, she found herself mistress of but twenty guineas in the whole world, and more than half of this she considered as already due to the benevolent sisters of St. Catherine's, who were ill able to afford any additional expence.

She had resolved to force them to accept, what indeed she deemed a poor return for their kindness to her, and she then intended to retire to some obscure hovel in the neighbourhood, as better suited to the state of her finances, and continue there till her health was sufficiently restored, to enable her to make exertions for her livelihood; but she shuddered at the idea of leaving St. Catherine's, and residing amongst a set of bores; she felt sensations something similar to those we

may suppose a person would feel, who was about being committed to a tempestuous ocean without any means of security.

Lord Mortimer had prevented the necessity which had prompted her to think of a removal, and she now resolved to reside at least for the time he had mentioned in the convent, during which she supposed her uncertainties relative to him would be over, and that, if it was not her fate to be his, she should, by the perfect re-establishment of her health, be enabled to use her abilities in the manner her situation required. Tears of heart-felt gratitude and sensibility flowed down her cheeks for him who had lightened her mind of the care which had so oppressed it.

She at length recollected the prioress had retired into the garden from complaisance to her, and yet continued in it, waiting no doubt to be summoned back by her. She hastily wiped away her tears, and folding up the precious letter, which was bedewed with them, repaired to the garden, resolving not to communicate its contents, as the divulgment of expectations (considering how liable all human ones are to be disappointed) she ever considered a piece of folly.

She found the prioress and sister Mary seated under a broken and ivy-covered arch. "Jesu!
my

my dear," said the latter, "I thought you would never come to us. Our good mother has been keeping me here in spite of my teeth, though I told her the sweet cakes I made for tea would be burned by this time, and that, supposing you were reading a letter from Lord Mortimer, there could be no harm in my seeing you." Amanda relieved the impatient Mary, and she took her seat. The prioress cast her piercing eyes upon her. She perceived she had been weeping, and that joy rather than sorrow caused her tears. She was too delicate to inquire into its source; but she took Amanda's hand, and gave it a pressure, which seemed to say, "I see, my dear child, you have met with something which pleases you, and my heart sympathizes as much in your happiness as in your grief."

Amanda returned the affectionate pressure with one equally tender, and a starting tear. They were soon called by sister Mary to partake of her hot cakes, which she had made indeed in hopes of tempting Amanda to eat after her bad dinner; the whole community were assembled at tea when the doctor entered the parlour. Amanda blushed, and looked grave at his first entrance; but he soon rallied her out of her gravity, and when the prioress and the nuns (according to custom) had withdrawn

withdrawn to evening vespers, he said, with a significant smile, "he feared she had not attended as much as he wished she should to the contents of the book he had last brought her." She saw by his manner he was acquainted with her situation relative to Lord Mortimer, and therefore replied, by saying, "that, perhaps, if he knew the motives which influenced her conduct, he would not think her wrong in disregarding what he had just mentioned." She also said, "she detested all kinds of stratagem, and was really displeased with him for practising one upon her."

"In a good cause," he said, "he should never hesitate using one. Lord Mortimer was the finest young fellow he had ever seen, and had won his favour, and the best wishes of his heart, from the first moment that he beheld him. He made me contrive," continued the doctor, "a story to gain admission to your Ladyship, and when I found him so dreadfully anxious about you, I gave you credit (as I had then no opportunity of judging for myself) for all the virtues and graces he ascribed to you, and which I have since perceived you to possess. You smile, and look as if you would call me a flatterer; seriously I assure you I am not one: I really think you worthy of Lord Mortimer, and, I assure you, that is as great a compliment as could be
be

be paid any woman. His mind was troubled with grief; he revealed his troubles and perplexities to me, and, after hearing them, no good Christian ever prayed more devoutly for another than I prayed for your recovery, that all your sorrows, like a novel, might terminate in marriage."

"You are obliging in your wishes," said Amanda, smiling.

"Faith, I am sincere in them," exclaimed he, "and do not know when I have been so disconcerted at things not turning out smoothly between you and his Lordship; but I will not despair: In all my own troubles, and Heaven has given me my share, I ever looked to the bright side of things, and shall always do so for my friends. I yet expect to see you settled at Castle Carberry, and to be appointed myself physician-general to your Ladyship's household." The mention of an event yet so uncertain greatly agitated Amanda, she blushed, and turned pale alternately, and convinced her good-natured, but loquacious, friend he had touched a chord which could not bear vibration. He hastily changed the discourse, and as soon as he saw her composed, rose to take his leave. — Amanda detained him for a minute, to try and prevail on him to take a ten guinea note; but he was inflexible, and said, with some archness, "till

the disorder, which preyed upon Lord Mortimer's heart, was in some degree alleviated, he would receive no recompense for his visits, which he assured Amanda, from time to time, he would continue to pay her, adding, a certain person had enjoined him now and then to take a peep within the holy walls of St. Catherine's."

The next morning Amanda set about a temporary arrangement of her affairs. She presented thirty guineas to the sisterhood, which, with much difficulty, she forced them to accept, though in reality it was much required by them; but when she came to speak of paying for a continuance, they positively declared they would agree to no such thing, as she had already so liberally rewarded them for any expence they had incurred on her account. She told them, that if they would not agree to be paid for lodging and board she would certainly leave them; though such a step was contrary to her inclinations, she assured them also she was at present well able to pay.

At last it was settled she should give them at the rate of forty pounds a year—a salary they thought extremely ample, considering the plain manner in which they lived. She then had all the things which belonged to her father and herself brought to the Convent, and had the former, with
whatever

whatever she did not immediately want, nailed up in a large chest, that at a short notice they might be removed. Her harp and guittar she had in her distrefs proposed sending back to the person in Dublin, from whom they were purchased, to sell for her; but she now determined to keep those presents of her beloved father's, except again urged by necessity to part with them. She had a variety of materials for painting and working, and proposed employing herself in executing pieces in each way, not only as a means of amusing her time, but as a resource on an evil day. Thus wisely making use of the present sun-shine, lest another storm should arise, which she should not be so well able to struggle against.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

In struggling with misfortunes

Lies the proof of virtue.

SHAKESPEARE'S *Troil. & Cryf.*

THE turbulence of grief, and the agitation of suspense, gradually lessened in the mind of Amanda, and were succeeded by a soft and pleasing melancholy, which sprang from the consciousness of having always, to the best of her abilities, performed the duties imposed upon her, and supported her misfortunes with placid resignation. She loved to think on her father, for amidst her sighs for his loss were mingled the delightful ideas of having ever been a source of comfort to him, and she believed, if departed spirits were allowed to review this world, his would look down upon her with

with delight and approbation at beholding her un-deviating in the path he had marked out for her to take ; the calm derived from such meditations she considered as a recompence for many sorrows, it was such indeed as nothing earthly gives, or can destroy, and what the good must ever experience, though amidst the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

She tried to prevent her thoughts from wandering to Lord Mortimer, as the surest means of retaining her composure, which fled whenever she reflected on the doubtful balance in which her fate yet hung concerning him.

The solitude of St. Catherine's was well adapted to her present situation and frame of mind. She was neither teized with impertinent or unmeaning ceremony, but perfect mistress of her own time and actions, read, worked and walked, as most agreeable to herself. She did not extend her walks beyond the Convent, as the scenes around it would awaken remembrances she had not sufficient fortitude to bear ; but the space it covered was ample enough to afford her many different and extensive rambles ; and of a still evening, when nothing but the lowing of the cattle, or the buzzing of the summer flies, was to be heard, she loved to wander through the solemn and romantic ruins,
sometimes

sometimes accompanied by a nun, but much oftener alone.

A fortnight had elapsed in this manner since Lord Mortimer's departure, when one morning a carriage was heard driving across the Common, and stopping at the outer gate of St. Catherine's: Amanda, who was sitting at work in the parlour with the prioress, started in an universal trepidation at the sound, it may be easily imagined the idea of Lord Mortimer was uppermost in her thoughts; the door opened in a few minutes, and to her great astonishment, Mrs. Kilcorban and her two daughters made their appearance.

Agitation and surprise prevented Amanda from speaking; she courtesied, and motioned for them to be seated. The young Ladies saluted her with an icy civility, and the mother treated her with a rude familiarity, which she thought herself authorized in using to one so reduced in circumstances as Amanda. "Dear me," cried she, "you can't think, child, how shocked we have all been to hear of your misfortunes! We only returned to the country yesterday, for we have been in town the whole winter, and to be sure a most delightful winter we have had of it, such balls, such routs, such racketings; but, as I was going to say, as soon as we came home I began, according to my
old

old custom, to inquire after all my neighbours, and to be sure the very first thing I heard was of the poor captain's death. Don't cry, my dear, we must all go one time or another, those are things of course as the Doctor says in his sermon; so, when I heard of your father's death, and your distress, I began to cast about in my brains some plan for helping you, and at last I hit upon one, which, says I to the girls, will delight the poor soul, as it will give her an opportunity of earning decent bread for herself. You must know, my dear, the tutoresses we brought to town would not come back with us—a dirty trollop by the bye, and I think her place would be quite the thing for you. You will have the four young girls to learn French, and work to, and I will expect you, as you have a good taste, to assist the eldest Miss Kilcorban in making up their things and dressing. I give twenty guineas a year. When we have no company the tutoresses always sits at the table, and gets, besides this, the best of treatment in every respect.”

A blush of indignation had gradually conquered Amanda's paleness during Mrs. Kilcorban's long and eloquent speech.—“Your intentions may be friendly, Madam,” cried she; “but I must decline your proposal.”

“Bless

“ Bless me, and why must you decline it? perhaps you think yourself not qualified to instruct; indeed this may be the case, for people often get credit for accomplishments they do not possess. — Well, if this is so, I am still content to take you, as you were always a decent behaved young body. Indeed you cannot expect I should give you twenty guineas a year.—No, no, I must make some abatement in the salary, if I am forced to get masters to help you in learning the girls. — Miss Fitzalan, Madam,” exclaimed the prioress, who had hitherto continued silent, ‘ never got credit for accomplishments which she did not possess; her modesty has rather obscured than blazoned forth her perfections; she does not therefore, Madam, decline your offer from a consciousness of inability to undertake the office of an instructor, but from a conviction she never could support impertinence and folly; should her situation ever require her to exert her talents for subsistence, I trust she never will experience the mortification of associating with those who are insensible of her worth, or unwilling to pay her the respect she merits.”

“ Hoity toity” cried Mrs. Kilcorban, “ what assurance! Why, Madam, many a better man’s child would be glad to jump at such an offer.”

“ Dear

“ Dear Madam,” said Miss Kilcorban, “ perhaps the young Lady has a better settlement in view. — We forget Lord Mortimer has been lately at Castle Carberry, and we all know his Lordship is a friend to Capt. Fitzalan’s daughter.”

“ Or, perhaps,” cried Miss Alicia, in a gigling tone, “ she means to be a nun.”

“ Indeed, I suppose she means to be nothing good,” rejoined Mrs. Kilcorban ; “ and I suppose it was by some impertinence or other she had a tiff with Lady Greystock. Lord ! (looking round the room) only see her music—books—her harp—her guittar—as if she had nothing to do but sing and thrum away the whole day. Well, Miss,” rising from her chair, “ you may yet be sorry your friend said so much about you. I did not come merely to offer to take you into my house, but to offer you also a good sum for your harp and guittar, supposing you had no business with such things now-a-days ; but I dare say you would have refused this offer.”

“ I certainly should, Madam,” said Amanda ; “ it must be strong necessity which compels me to part with my beloved father’s presents.”

“ Well, well, child, I wish this pride of thine may not yet be humbled.” So saying, she flounced out of the room, followed by her daughters, who,
under

under an affectation of contempt, evidently shewed they were chagrined by the reception they had met.

The prioress indulged herself in a long fit of laughter, at the passion into which she had thrown Mrs. Kilcorban ; and Amanda, who considered the Lady and her daughters as the most insignificant of beings, soon recovered from the discomposure their visit had occasioned.

In the course of the evening a letter was delivered her by the servant, who said the messenger who brought it waited for an answer. Amanda, in an universal trepidation, broke the seal ; but, instead of Lord Mortimer's, as she expected, a hand, to her entirely new, struck her view :

TO MISS FITZALAN.

“ MY DEAR CREATURE,

“ I think I never was so diverted in my life as at the account my mother and sisters gave of the reception they met with from you to-day at St. Catherine's. I vow to God it was excellent ; nor can I help still wondering at their absurdity, in thinking such a devilish fine girl as you are, would sacrifice your time in instructing a parcel of chits,

when it can be devoted to so much better a purpose ! To be brief, my dear girl, I will take you immediately under my protection ; if not, your own fault, bring you to Dublin, settle you in elegant lodgings, with a handsome allowance, and not only make you, but declare you to be the grand Sultana of my affection, a situation which, I can assure you, you will not be a little envied enjoying. In your answer to this, I shall expect to hear when I may have the felicity of bringing you from obscurity, to the brilliant scene you were formed to ornament. Adieu, my dear,

Believe me your devoted,

B. KILCORBAN."

The indignation, which filled Amanda's breast at reading this scroll, cannot be expressed. Her blood seemed to boil in her veins ; it was some time ere she could sufficiently compose herself to acquaint the Prioress with the cause of her agitation ; it was then agreed that the letter should be returned, with the following lines written on it :

" The author of this effusion of ignorance and impertinence has already inspired all the contempt he merits ; should he repeat his insolence, something

thing even more mortifying than contempt, chastisement must ensue."

That a repetition of this kind would be the case she did not believe. From Kilcorban she had no reason to expect either the perseverance or designs of Belgrave; one was a libertine from principle, the other she believed from fashion, and that, to pique his pride, would be a sure method of getting rid of him.

But the calm she had for some time experienced was destined to be interrupted. The next morning brought father O'Gallaghan, the little fat priest, (of whom we have made mention before in our pages) to the Convent; he was not the officiating priest, but, notwithstanding this, paid many visits to the sisterhood, with whom he was a great favourite, he had been much concerned about Amanda's illness. She was sitting alone in the parlour drawing when he entered it. He seated himself by her, and the expression of his countenance seemed to declare his heart was brim full of something pleasant.

"You won't be offended now, my dear sowl," said he, smirking up in her face, "with a body for asking you how you would like to leave this dismal solitude, and have a comfortable home of your
your

your own, where you might see your own friends, and have every thing warm and cosy about you?"

"Why," said Amanda, "though I do not consider this a dismal solitude, yet to be sure I should have no objection to a pleasant settled habitation."

"Aye, I always thought you a sensible young body. Well, and what would you say to the person then who could point out such an habitation? Aye, you little rogue, who could say they had just such a one in their eye for you?"

Amanda stared at him with astonishment. She had at first believed him jesting, but now found him serious.

"Aye faith, my dear creature," cried he, continuing his discourse, with a look of the most perfect satisfaction, "I have an offer to make you, which, I believe, would make many girls jump almost out of their skins with joy to hear."

"You remember the O'Flannaghans I am sure, where you took tea last summer. Well, the eldest of the sons (as honest a lad as ever broke bread) cast a sheep's eye upon you then; but what with your going from the country, and some other matters, he thought there was no use then in revealing his flame; but now, when you are come plump in his way again, faith he plucked up his courage, and told his father all about it. Old Flannaghan

is a good-natured soul, and is very willing the match should take place. They have every thing snug about them. The old man will give every thing into your spouse's hands; the youngest son will live in the house till he gets married, and goes off to a farm of his own; the eldest daughter is married; the second will live with her, and the youngest will be a little handy assistant to you:— So you see you will not be tormented with a large family. There is one little matter which to be sure they are a little uneasy about, and that is your being of different persuasions; but says I to them when this was started—faith," says I, "you need not give yourself any trouble about it, for I know the young woman to be a discreet soul, and I am sure she will make no hesitation about going to Chapel instead of Church, when she knows too it is for her own interest: So, my dear soul, I hope soon to give you the nuptial benediction, and to be also your spiritual director."

Amanda had listened to this speech in silent amazement. She now rose, and would have quitted the room without speaking, to evince her contempt, had not an idea darted into her mind, that such conduct, perhaps, might not be construed by the ignorant priest in the manner she wished; she therefore stopped, and turning to him,
said,

said, "He could not wonder at her being offended at his pretending to answer so freely for her in matters so important as religion; but to prove how presumptuous he was in every thing he said about her, she must assure him his embassy to her was equally fruitless and disagreeable; and that if Mr. O'Flannaghan consulted his own happiness, he would seek to unite himself with a woman brought up in his own sphere of life." — So saying, she quitted the room with a look of dignity which quite confounded the poor priest, who snatched up his hat in a great hurry, and waddled away to the farm, to communicate the ill success of his visit, which had quite crushed his expectations of wedding presents and pudding feasts, which he had contemplated in idea with delight."

It was some time ere Amanda recovered from the discomposure into which the impertinence of the Kilcorbans and the priest had thrown her. — From what she suffered in consequence of it, she was forcibly convinced how ill qualified she was to struggle with a world where she would be continually liable to such shocks; she had yet a hope of escaping them—a hope of being guarded by the tutelary care of Lord Mortimer, and of being one of the happiest of her sex.

C H A P. V.

Lo! I am here to answer to your vows,
And be the meeting fortunate! I come
With joyful tidings; we shall part no more. —

Pleasures Imagination.

BUT a shock more severe than those she had lately experienced, was yet in store for our hapless heroine. — About a fortnight after the visit of the Kilcorbans and the priest, as she was rambling one evening according to custom amongst the solitary ruins of St. Catherine's, indulging the pensive meditations of her soul, the figure of a man suddenly darted from under a broken arch, and discovered to her view the features of the hated Belgrave. Amanda gave a faint cry, and in unutterable dismay tottered back a few paces against a wall. Cruel Amanda, exclaimed Belgrave,

grave, while his look seemed to imply he would take advantage of her situation, his look, his voice, operated like a charm to rouse her from the kind of stupefaction into which she had fallen at first sight of him, and as he attempted to lay hold of her she sprang past him, and, with a swiftness which mocked his speed, flew through the intricate windings of the place till she reached the Convent. — Her pale and distracted look, as she rushed into the prioress's apartment, terrified the good old Lady, who hastily interrogated her as to the cause of her disorder; but Amanda was unable to speak. The appearance of Belgrave she thought an omen of every ill to her. Her blood run cold through her veins at his sight, and terror totally subdued her powers. The Prioress summoned sister Mary to her relief, drops and water were administered, and the over-loaded heart of the trembling Amanda was relieved by tears. The Prioress again asked the cause of her agitation, but perceiving Amanda did not like to speak before sister Mary, she immediately pretended to think it proceeded from fatigue, and Mary, who was simplicity itself, readily credited the idea. The Prioress soon sent her upon some pretext from the room, and then, in the gentlest terms, begged to know what had so cruelly alarmed her young friend. Amanda had

already confided to the Prioress the events of her life, so that the good Lady, on hearing Belgrave now mentioned, no longer wondered at the agitation of Amanda, yet, as her fears she saw were too powerful for her reason, she endeavoured to convince her they were unnecessary. She called to her remembrance the singular protection she had already experienced from Heaven, and the protection which, while she was innocent, she would still have a right to expect. She also mentioned the security of her present situation, encompassed by friends whose integrity could not be warped, and whose utmost zeal would be manifested in defeating any stratagems which might be laid against her.

Amanda grew composed as she listened to the Prioress; she was cheered by the voice of piety and friendship, and her heart again felt firm and elevated. She acknowledged that, after the singular, nay almost miraculous interpositions of Providence she had experienced in her favour, to give way to terror or despair was sinful, since it shewed a distrust of the Power, who has promised, with guardian care, to watch the footsteps of the innocent.

It was however agreed that Amanda should venture no more from the Convent, but confine her rambles to the garden, which was enclosed with a
high

high wall, and had no places of concealment. — Five weeks yet remained of the period Lord Mortimer had requested her to stay at St. Catherine's ; before it was expired, she trusted and believed Belgrave would be weary of watching her, and would decamp ; if then she neither saw nor heard from Lord Mortimer, she resolved to relinquish all hope concerning him, and immediately think upon some plan, which should put her in a way of procuring subsistence.

Her paintings and embroidery still went on ; she had executed some elegant pictures in both, which, if obliged to dispose of, she was sure would bring a good price ; yet, whenever compelled by reflection to this idea, the tear of tender melancholy would fall upon her lovely cheek, a tear which was ever hastily wiped away, while she endeavoured to fortify her mind with pious resignation to whatever should be her future fate.

Three weeks more elapsed without any event to discompose their tranquillity ; but as the termination of the destined period approached, the agitation of Amanda, in spite of all her efforts to the contrary, increased ; she deemed the awful crisis of her fate at hand, and she trembled at the reflection.

She now, for the first time, avoided solitude; she wanted to fly from herself, and sat constantly with the Priorefs, who had nothing of the gloomy recluse, save the habit about her.

They were chatting together one evening after tea, when sister Mary entered the room, bearing a large paquet, which she rather tossed than presented to Amanda, exclaiming, "From Lord Mortimer, I wish the troublesome fellow had not come back again; here we shall have him frisking or storming continually, and again plaguing us out of our lives."

"From Lord Mortimer!" exclaimed Amanda, starting from her chair, and clasping the letter between her hands, "Oh! gracious Heaven!" She said no more, but flew from the room to her chamber. She tore open the seal; the envelop contained two letters, the first was directed in a hand unknown to her; her heart sickened, as she dropped it on the ground; the other was the superscription of Lord Mortimer. She opened it with revived spirits, and read as follows;

TO MISS FITZALAN.

"I am returned, returned to tell my Amanda that nothing but the awful fiat of Heaven shall
part

part us more. Yes, my love, a sweet reward for all our difficulties, our trials, let me add, our persevering constancy, is at hand, and one name, one interest, one fate, I trust, will soon be ours."

Tears of joy gushed from Amanda as she exclaimed, "Can this, can this be true? Is Lord Mortimer so long, so hopelessly beloved, indeed returned to tell me we shall part no more? 'Tis true, 'tis true, and never can my grateful heart sufficiently acknowledge the goodness it experiences; but how was this event brought about?" She wiped away her tears, and resumed the letter.

"Your solemn refusal to unite yourself to me threw me into agonies; but true love, like true courage, will never despair, will never yield to difficulties, without first trying every effort to conquer them: I soon therefore roused myself from the heavy weight which oppressed my spirits at your resolution, and ere long conceived a project so feasible, so almost certain of success, that my impatience to realize it cannot be described; yet you may conceive some idea of it from the abrupt manner in which I quitted Castle Carberry, without desiring to bid you adieu; but ere it could be accomplished I plainly saw I had many difficulties to encounter, difficulties which it was absolutely essential to overcome, that I might prove to the

E 6 world

world I was not the dupe of love ; but the friend, the lover, and the vindicator of real innocence and virtue. From what I have said, you may suppose the difficulties I allude to were such as I expected to encounter in my attempt to unravel the whole of the deep and execrable plot which involved you in a situation so distressing to your feelings, and injurious to your character ; and, oh ! with what mingled pride and pleasure did I meditate on being your champion, clearing your fame from each dark aspersions, and proving, clearly proving, that your mind was as lovely, as angelic, as your person !

“ I was happy, on my arrival in London, to find Lady Martha Dormar still at Lord Cherbury’s house. I have already told you that I left town on pretence of a visit to my sister in Wales. My father, I soon perceived, suspected that had not been the real motive of my departure ; but I also perceived he did not desire to reveal his suspicions, as he asked some questions concerning Lady Araminta, which you may be sure I answered awkwardly enough, and, had a comic writer been present, he might have taken the hint of a good blundering scene from us both.

“ The Marquis of Roseline and his family I learned continued at his villa ; their absence from town

town rejoiced me, as it not only exempted me from society I abhorred, but as it gave me an opportunity of interrogating their household, amongst whom I was convinced I should discover the trusty agents the amiable Marchioness had made use of in her scheme against you, the morning after my arrival: I accordingly set off to Portman Square. The man who opened the door knew me not, which I considered a lucky circumstance, for not being able to mention my name to the house-keeper, whom I desired him to send to me, she was not as much on her guard as she would otherwise have been: — She started as she entered the parlour, and lifted up her hands and eyes with unfeigned astonishment. Soon however recovering herself, she addressed me in the most obsequious manner, and spoke as if she supposed I was come purposely to inquire after her Lord and Lady, an artful way of trying to terminate her own suspense by learning the nature of my visit. I soon gave her to understand it was not of the most amicable kind to her: I came, I said, to demand either the letter, or an account of the letter which I had intrusted to her care for Miss Fitzalan, which contained a note of large value, and which I found had never been received by that young Lady. Her countenance in a moment
condemned

condemned her ; it spoke stronger than a thousand tongues against her. She first grew deadly pale, then fiery red, trembled, faltered, and hung her head to avoid my eyes. Her looks I told her confirmed the suspicions I was forced to entertain of her integrity, yet, shocking as the action was which she had committed, being not only a breach of trust but humanity, I was willing to come to an easy and private accommodation about it, provided she would truly and fully confess the part she had taken, or knew others to have taken in injuring Miss Fitzalan, while she resided in the Marquis's house, by bringing Colonel Belgrave into it. I paused for her reply. She appeared as if considering how she should act. I thought I saw something yielding in her face, and eager to take advantage of it, I proceeded. What I have already said I am going again to repeat, that is, if you confess all you know relative to the plot which was contrived, and carried into execution in this house against Miss Fitzalan, I will settle every thing relative to the letter, and its contents, in a manner pleasing to you. Her innocence is unquestioned by me ; but it is essential to her peace that it should also be so to the rest of her friends, and they who regard her welfare will liberally reward those, whose allegations shall justify her.

“ Upon

“ Upon this she turned to me, with a countenance of the utmost effrontery, and said she would not tell a lye to please any one. I will not shock you by repeating all she said: She ended by saying, as to the letter she set me at defiance; true, I had given her one for Miss Fitzalan, but I might remember Miss Fitzalan was in a fit on the ground at the time, and she had called in other servants to her assistance she said, and in the hurry and bustle which ensued, she knew not what became of it, others might as well be called upon as her. I could no longer command my temper: I told her she was a wretch, and only fit for the diabolical service in which she was employed. The note, which I inclosed in the letter, I had given her for you, I had received from my father’s agent in the country, as a post note I had endorsed it, and taken the number in my pocket-book: I therefore left Portman Square with a resolution of going to the Bank, and, if not already received, stopping payment. I stepped into the first hackney coach I met, and had the satisfaction of finding it had not been offered at the Bank. I suspected she would be glad to exchange it for cash as soon as possible, and therefore left my direction, as well as a request for the detention of any person who should present it.

“ In

“ In consequence of this a clerk came the following morning, to inform me a woman had presented the note at the Bank, and was, agreeable to my request, detained till I appeared. I immediately returned with him, and had the satisfaction of seeing the housekeeper caught in the snare. — She burst into tears at my appearance, and coming up to me, in a low voice, said, ‘ If I would have mercy upon her, she would in return make a full confession of all she knew about the affair I had mentioned to her yesterday.’

“ I told her, though she deserved no mercy, yet, as I had promised on such condition to shew her lenity, I would not violate my word. I received the note, sent for a coach, and handing the Lady into it, soon conveyed her to Portman-Square. She no sooner entered the parlour than she fell on her knees, and besought my forgiveness. I bid her rise, and lose no time in revealing all she knew concerning the scheme against you. She then confessed, that both she and Mrs. Jane, the attendant who had been placed about your person, were acquainted, and concerned in all the contrivances the Marchioness had laid against you, who scrupled not in acknowledging to them the inveterate hatred she bore you. Their scruples, for they pretended to have some in abetting her schemes,

schemes, were over-ruled, by knowing how much it was in her power to injure them in any future establishment, had they disoblged her, and by her liberal promises of reward, which the housekeeper added she had never kept; but this brief and un-circumstantial account was by no means satisfactory to me. I called for materials for writing, and insisted she should, to the best of her recollection, relate every word or circumstance which had ever passed between her and the Marchioness, and their other associate, relative to you. She hesitated at this. On those terms only I said I would grant her my forgiveness, and by her complying with them, not only that, but a liberal recompence should be hers. This last promise had the desired effect: She laid open indeed a scene of complicated iniquity, related the manner in which Colonel Belgrave was brought into the house by her and Mrs. Jane, how they had stationed themselves in a place of concealment to listen, by which means they knew what passed between you, which she now, in almost the very same words you made use of, repeated to me: As she spoke I wrote it, and made her sign the paper under a paragraph, purporting, that it was a true confession of the part she had taken, and knew others to have taken, in attempting to injure Miss Fitzalan.

“ I

“ I now mentioned Mrs. Jane, whose evidence I wished for to corroborate her's. This she assured me I might procure by promising a reward, as Mrs. Jane was much dissatisfied with the Marchioness and Lady Euphrasia, neither of whom had recompensed her as she expected, for her faithful services to them. She was now at the villa; but the housekeeper added, that she would strike out some expedient to bring her to town in the course of the week, and would inform me immediately of her arrival. I told her the affair of the note should be no more mentioned, and gave a bill for fifty pounds as the reward I had promised, and she eagerly expected. I told her she might promise a similar one in my name to Mrs. Jane, provided she also told truth. I also told her I would take care she should suffer no distress by quitting the Marquis's family, which she lamented would be the consequence of what she had done.

“ Mrs. Jane did not come to town as soon as I expected; but on receiving a summons to inform me of her arrival, I hastened to the house like an inquisitor general with my scroll, prepared to take the confession of the fair culprit, which exactly corresponded with the housekeeper's, and I had the felicity of seeing her subscribe her name to it. I gave her the promised recompence most cheerfully,

cheerfully, as I had not half so much trouble in making her tell truth, as I had with the house-keeper. Mrs. Jennings, your old landlady, and Lady Greystock's faithful friend, was the next and last person whose malice I wanted to refute. I made my servant inquire her character in the neighbourhood, and learned it was considered a very suspicious one. I went to her one morning in my carriage, well knowing that the appearance of rank and splendor would have greater weight in influencing a being like her to justice than any plea of conscience. She appeared lost in astonishment and confusion at my visit, and I saw waited with trembling expectation to have the reason of it revealed. I kept her not long in suspense: I was the friend I told her of a young Lady, whose character she had vilely and falsely aspersed. Her conscience I believed would whisper to her heart the name of this Lady, and send its crimson current to her face at the mention of Miss Fitzalan.

"The wretch seemed ready to sink to the earth. I repeated to her all she had said concerning you to Lady Greystock. I told her of the consequences of defamation, and declared she might expect the utmost rigour of the law, except she confessed her assertions were infamous falsehoods,
and

and the motives which instigated her to them. She trembled with terror, and supplicated mercy: I desired her to deserve it by her confession. She then acknowledged she had grossly and cruelly wronged you, by what she had said to Lady Greystock, and that she had many opportunities of being convinced, while you resided in her house, that your virtue and innocence were of the purest nature; but that she was provoked to speak maliciously against you from resentment at losing all the rich gifts Colonel Belgrave had promised her, if she brought you to comply with his wishes. She related all the stratagems they had mutually concerted for your destruction, and she brought me some letters, which I have kept, from him to you, and which she pretended you had received, lest she should lose the money he always gave when she was successful in delivering one.

“ I bid her beware how she ever attempted to vilify innocence, lest the friends of those, at whom she levelled the arrows of defamation, should not be as merciful to her as Miss Fitzalan’s had been, and was the tale of the slanderer thus ever to be minutely investigated, the evil might die away by degrees, and many hapless victims escape, who are daily sacrificed to malice, revenge, or envy.

“ Oh !

“ Oh ! my Amanda, I cannot express the transports I felt when I found the difficulties, which I dreaded as intervening between me and happiness, thus removed. I felt myself the happiest of men ; my heart acknowledged your worth, I was convinced of your love, and in my hands I held the refutation of falshood, and the confirmation of your innocence.

“ The period for mentioning my project was now arrived : I desired, the morning after my visit to Mrs. Jennings, to be indulged in a tête-à-tête in Lady Martha’s dressing room : I believe she half guessed what the subject of it would be ; she saw by my countenance there was joyful news at hand, I shall not recapitulate our conversation ; suffice it to say, that her excellent feeling heart participated largely in my satisfaction ; it did more than participate, it wished to increase it, and ere I could mention my project, she declared my Amanda should henceforth be considered as her adopted daughter, and should from her receive such a fortune as such a title claimed. Yes, my Amanda, the fortune she ever destined for me, she said she should now consecrate to the purpose of procuring me a treasure the most valuable Heaven could bestow ; — the richest—the most valuable indeed — a treasure dearer, far dearer
to

to my soul for all the dangers it has encountered. I fell at Lady Martha's feet in a transport of gratitude, and acknowledged that she had anticipated what I was going to say, as I had been determined to throw myself on her generosity from the time I was convinced of your inflexible resolution, not to unite yourself to me without you brought a fortune.

"It was now agreed we should keep Lord Cherbury a little longer ignorant of our intentions; we proposed taking the Marchioness and Lady Euphrasia by surprise, and hoped, by so doing, to be able to remove from his eyes the mist which partiality had hitherto spread before them, to obscure the defects of the above-mentioned Ladies.

"He had hinted more than once his wishes for my paying my compliments at the Marquis's villa. I now proposed going thither myself the ensuing day. He looked equally surprised and pleased: At this proposal Lady Martha agreed to accompany me, and his Lordship, you may be sure, determined to be one of the party, that he might supply the deficiencies of his son, which he had heretofore found pretty manifest in such society.

“ We had the happiness to find all the family at home when we reached the villa. The Ladies all expressed themselves delighted at my unexpected appearance, and quite charmed by my recovered looks. The Marquis, with his usual sang froid, declared himself glad to see me. Ye smiling deceivers, I cried to myself, as I surveyed the Marchioness and Lady Euphrasia, your triumph over innocence and beauty will soon be over. — After passing half an hour in uninteresting chit-chat, I took the opportunity of one of those pauses in conversation, which so frequently happen, to commence my attack; it would be as painful to you as to me, to recapitulate all which ensued in consequence of it. Rage, guilt, and confusion, were conspicuous in the Marchioness and Lady Euphrasia; the Marquis and Lady Greystock looked astonishment, and my father seemed overwhelmed with surprise and consternation.

“ I said, (addressing the Marchioness) I now trusted the resentment her Ladyship entertained against her unoffending niece was sufficiently appeased by what she had made her suffer, and that she would rather rejoice than regret the opportunity which presented itself of vindicating her fame. I wished, I said, as much as possible, to spare her Ladyship’s feelings, and, provided she would clear
Miss

Miss Fitzalan from the obloquy, which the transactions in her house cast upon her, I was willing to conceal the share her Ladyship had in them.

“ In a voice of smothered rage, and with a look into which she threw as much contempt as possible, she replied, ‘ She thanked me for the attention I professed myself inclined to pay her feelings; but she fancied I had overlooked all inclination of this kind when I undertook to bribe her servants to asperse her character, that Miss Fitzalan’s might be cleared. She was sorry, she said, to find I could be capable of such complicated baseness and weakness. Miss Fitzalan, she perceived, had made me her dupe again; but this was not surprising, as she was the professed pupil of art; too late I should behold her in her native colours, and find the disgrace, which, by artifice, I now attempted to remove from her character, thrown back upon her, perhaps, to overwhelm me also by its weight.

“ She has infatuated him, (said Lord Cherbury) she will be the bane of his life, the destruction of my hopes.”

“ Not Miss Fitzalan, (cried I, assuming as much coolness as possible, though, like the Marchioness, I found it a difficult task) not Miss Fitzalan, but the enemies of Miss Fitzalan deceived me. I own I was the dupe of the scheme contrived against her;

her ; any thing so horrid, so monstrous, so execrable, I did not think could have entered into the minds of those who were bound by the united ties of kindred and hospitality to protect her, and I rather believed I owed my misery to the frailty than to the turpitude of human nature."

" You see, my Lord (exclaimed the Marchioness, turning to Lord Cherberry) Lord Mortimer acknowledges his passion for this wretched girl."

" I do (cried I) I glory in confessing it. In loving Miss Fitzalan, I love virtue itself ; in acknowledging a passion for her, I violate no faith, I break no engagement ; my heart ever resisted entering into any which it could not fulfil."

" Unfortunate prepossession (said Lord Cherberry, sternly :) But why, why, when you believed her guilty, were you so infatuated as to follow her to Ireland ? Why not calmly resign her to the infamy she merited ?"

" I followed her, my Lord (I replied) in hope to withdraw her from her seducer's arms, and place her in her father's. I hoped, I trusted, I should be able also to alleviate the bitter destiny of poor Fitzalan : Alas ! not in the arms of a gay, successful seducer, but apparently in the arms of death did I find Amanda. I saw her at the solemn hour which consigned her parent to his grave, and

to have doubted her protestations of innocence, then would have been almost impious. Gracious Heaven ! how impossible to disbelieve her truth at the very moment her gentle spirit seemed about to take its flight to Heaven ! From that period she has stood acquitted in my mind, and from that period I determined to develop, to the utmost of my power, the machinations which had made me doubt her innocence. My success in their development has been beyond my expectations ; but Providence is on the side of suffering virtue, and assists those who stand up in its support."

" Contrary to my first intention, my dear Amanda, I have given you a sketch of part of our conversation : For the remainder it shall suffice to say, that the Marchioness persevered in declaring I had bribed her servant to blacken her character, in order to clear Miss Fitzalan's, an attempt she repeatedly assured me I would find unsuccessful."

" The Marquis talked in high terms of the dignity of his house, and how impossible it was the Marchioness should ever have disgraced it by such actions as I accused her of committing. I answered him in a manner equally warm, that my accusations were too well grounded and supported to dread refutation ; that it was not only due to injured

injured innocence, but essential to my own honour, which would soon be materially concerned in whatever related to Miss Fitzalan, to have those accusations made public, if her Ladyship refused to contradict the aspersions which might be thrown upon Miss Fitzalan, in consequence of the scene which passed at his Lordship's house.

“ This the Marchioness, with mingled rage and contempt refused doing, and Lady Eupharsia, after the hint I gave of soon being united to you, left the room in convulsive agitation.

“ Lord Cherbury I perceived suspected foul play, by some speeches which dropped from him, such as, if there had been any misunderstanding between her Ladyship and Miss Fitzalan, it was better surely to have it done away, or certainly, if any mistake was proved relative to the affair which happened in her Ladyship's house, it was but justice to the young Lady to have it cleared up.

“ Yet, notwithstanding the interest he felt in the cause of suffering innocence, it was obvious to me that he dreaded a rupture with the Marquis's family, and appeared shocked at the unequivocal declaration I had made of never being allied to it.

“ Lady Martha Dormer took up the cause: The testimony Lord Mortimer had received, she said, of Miss Fitzalan's innocence was incontrovertible,

and exempted him alike from being stigmatized either as the dupe of art or love; humanity, she was convinced, exclusive of every warmer feeling, would have influenced him to have undertaken Miss Fitzalan's cause; it was the cause of innocence and virtue, a cause in which every detester of scandal and treachery should join, since not only the defenceless orphan, but the protected child of rank and prosperity were vulnerable to their shafts.

"I again repeated the evidence of her servants, and the refutation of Mrs. Jennings to her former story; I produced, to strengthen it, the unopened letters of Colonel Belgrave — thus continuing to put proof upon proof of your innocence (as Sancho Panza says) upon the shoulders of demonstration.

"The passions of the Marchioness rose at last to frantic violence. She persisted in alledging her integrity, and vilifying yours; but with a countenance so legibly impressed with guilt and confusion, that a doubt of her falsehood could not be entertained even by those who wished to doubt it.

"The scene of violence we now became witness to was painful to me, and shocking to Lady Martha: I therefore ordered the horses immediately to her Ladyship's chariot, in which, accompanied

panied by me, she had preceded Lord Cherbury's coach, from the idea that our continuance at the villa might not be quite so long as his Lordship's.

"As we expected, his Lordship staid behind, with the hope I perceived of being able to calm the perturbations of the Marchioness, and lessen the breach between us. He returned the next day to town. I have so long dwelt upon disagreeable scenes, that to go over any others would be dreadful; nor should I hint to you that I had such scenes to encounter, was it not to excuse and account to you for my absence from Castle Carberry: Our difficulties (you see I already unite your interest with mine) began to decrease, and are at last happily overcome. — Lady Martha made me write her intentions relative to you, and his Lordship was quite satisfied with them. He authorises me to assure you he longs to receive you into his family, at once a boast and acquisition to it, and he says, he shall consider himself under obligations to you, if you hasten, as much as possible, the period of becoming one of its members, thus giving him an opportunity of making early amends, by attention to the daughter for the injustice he did the father.

"Lady Martha Dormer's intentions I have only hinted to you; in the letter, which I have the

pleasure of enclosing, she is more explicit concerning them. I have given you this long narrative on paper, that when we meet, our conversation may be unembittered by any painful retrospect, and that we may enjoy uninterrupted the bright prospect which now lies before us.

“ But ere I close my letter, I must inform you that, knowing you could never be selfishly wrapped up in your own enjoyments, I made every possible inquiry relative to your brother, and was at length referred by the agent of his late regiment to an officer in it; with some difficulty I found he had quitted his quarters on leave of absence. I wrote immediately to his family residence, and after waiting long and impatiently for an answer to my letter, I dispatched a special messenger to learn whether he was there or not. — The courier returned with a polite note from the officer's father, informing me his son was gone on an excursion of pleasure with some friends, and that, if he knew where to find him, he would have transmitted my letter, which I might depend on being answered the moment he returned.

“ I have no doubt but we shall receive intelligence from him concerning Mr. Fitzalan; it shall then be our business, if his situation is not already pleasing,

pleasing, to change it, or render it as much so as possible to him.

“ Keep up your spirits therefore about him, for by the time we arrive in England I expect a letter from his friend, and let me not be any more pained by seeing your countenance clouded with care or anxiety.

“ As a reward for reining in my impatience to see you this evening, be propitious to my request for early admission to-morrow; if charitable you will allow me to breakfast with you, for I shall take none except with you, and without an express command to the contrary, shall take it for granted I am expected.

“ 'Tis said that contrast heightens pleasure, and I believe the saying. — I believe that, without having felt pain in all its acuteness as I have done, I never should have felt such pleasure as I now enjoy. After so often giving you up, so often lamenting you as lost for ever, to think I shall soon call you mine, is a source of transport which words cannot express. Mine, I may say, is the resurrection of happiness, for has it not been revived from the very grave of despair; but I forget that you have Lady Martha Dormer's letter still to peruse. I acknowledge that, for old friendship's sake, I supposed you would give mine

the preference ; but in all reason it is time I should resign my place to her Ladyship : But ere I bid you adieu, I must tell you that Araminta is a sincere participater in our happiness ; she arrived from Wales but a few minutes previous to my leaving London, and I would not allow her time, as she wished, to write to you. I almost forgot to tell you, that the Marquis's family, amongst whom Lady Greystock is still numbered, instead of returning to town, set out for Brighthelmstone : I have learned contrary to my and their expectations, that neither the housekeeper nor Mrs. Jane have been dismissed, but both sent to a distant seat of the Marquis's. As we know the Marchioness's revengeful disposition, it is plain she has some secret motive for not gratifying it immediately by their dismissal ; but what it is can be of little consequence for us to learn, since we are both too well guarded to suffer from any future plot of her's ; like every other which was formed against my dear Amanda, I trust they will ever prove abortive. I was disturbed within a few miles of Castle Carberry by a Gentleman passing on horseback, who either strongly resembled, or was Col. Belgrave. My blood boiled in my veins at his sight ; I left the carriage, mounted one of my servant's horses, and endeavoured to overtake him.

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He certainly avoided me by taking some cross-road, as his speed could not have out-stripped mine; my efforts to discover his habitation were equally unsuccessful. As to your personal security I had no apprehensions, having heard constantly from my good friend the Doctor about you; but I dreaded the wretch, if it were really him, might disturb your tranquillity, either by forcing into your presence or writing; thank Heaven from all intrusions or dangers of this kind, my Amanda will now be guarded; but again am I trespassing on the time you should devote to Lady Martha's letter. Adieu, and do not disappoint my hopes of being allowed to visit you early. MORTIMER."

Amanda perused this letter with emotions which can be better conceived than described. She could scarcely have parted with it without a second reading, had not Lady Martha's demanded her attention; she snatched it hastily from the ground where it had hitherto lay neglected, and read to the following purpose.

"That I warmly and sincerely congratulate my dear and amiable Miss Fitzalan on the happy revolution in her affairs she will readily believe, persuaded as she must be of the deep interest I take in whatever concerns a person on whom the happiness of him, whom I have loved from childhood, so materially, so entirely I may say depends.

“ Yet do not suppose me, my dear Miss Fitzalan, so selfish, as not to be able to rejoice at your happiness on your own account, exclusive of every consideration relative to Lord Mortimer, long since I was taught by description to esteem and admire you, and even when the hope of being connected with you became extinct, I could not so totally forego that admiration as to feel uninterested about you. Oh ! how truly do I rejoice at the revival of the hope I have just mentioned, and at its revival with every prospect of its being speedily realized. I shall consider Lord Mortimer as one of the most fortunate of men in calling you his, and to think I have been able to promote his happiness gives me a satisfaction, which never was, nor ever will be equalled by any circumstance in my life.

“ Though I cannot give my adopted daughter a fortune by any means equal to that which Lady Euphrasia Sutherland will possess, Lord Cherbury is fully sensible that her perfections will abundantly make up for any deficiency in this respect. Ten thousand pounds, and one thousand a year, is at present to be her portion, and the reversion of the remainder of my fortune is to be secured to her and Lord Mortimer ; the final adjustment of all affairs is to take place at my house in the country, whither I propose going immediately, accompanied
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by Lady Araminta, and where we shall both most impatiently expect your arrival, which we mutually entreat may be hastened as much as possible, consistent with your health and convenience, Lord Cherbury has promised to follow us in a few days, so that I suppose he will also be at Thornbury to receive you. Would to Heaven, my dear Miss Fitzalan, injured virtue and innocence may always met with such champions to vindicate them as Lord Mortimer; was that the case we should see many lovely victims of scorn and reproach raising their lowly heads with triumph and satisfaction: But pardon my involuntarily adverting to past scenes, though at the same time I think you have reason to rejoice at your trials, which served as so many tests and proofs of the estimable qualities you possess. Farewell, my dear Miss Fitzalan; I have been brief in my letter, because I know I should not be pardoned by a certain person, if I engrossed too much of your time. I told him I would give you a hint of the impetuosity of his disposition; but he told me, perhaps to prevent this, that you were already acquainted with it. In one instance I shall commend him for displaying it, that is, in hastening you to Thornbury, to the arms of your sincere and affectionate friend,

Amanda's happiness was now almost as great as it could be in this world, almost I say, for it received alloy from the melancholy consideration that her father, that faithful and affectionate friend who had shared her troubles, could not be a partaker of her joys; but the sigh of unavailing regret which rose in her mind she checked, by reflecting, that happiness all perfect was more than humanity could either support or expect, and with pious gratitude she bent to the Power who had changed the discoloured prospect, by which she had been so long surrounded, into one of cheerfulness and beauty.

If her pride was wounded by the hint, though so delicately conveyed, which Lord Mortimer had given of the difficulties he encountered in gaining Lord Cherbury's approbation, it was instantly relieved by the flattering commendations of Lady Martha Dormer, and to be connected with her and Lady Araminta, she looked upon amongst the most valuable blessings she should enjoy.

To express what she felt for Lord Mortimer would be impossible; language could not do justice to her feelings; she felt love, gratitude, and admiration for him all in their fullest extent, and all united, and she wept in the fullness of her heart over

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the joyful assurance of being his. With the two letters in her hand she repaired to the Prioress's apartment, whom she found alone. The good old Lady saw the traces of tears on Amanda's face, and exclaimed, in a voice which evinced her sympathy in her concerns, "O! I fear, my child, something has happened to disturb you?" Amanda presented her the letters, and bid her judge from them whether she had not reason to be agitated. As the Prioress read, her sudden and broken exclamations manifested her surprise and pleasure, and frequently were her spectacles removed to wipe from off them the tears of joy, by which they were bedewed. When she finished the welcome packet, she turned to Amanda, who had been attentively watching the various turns in her countenance, and gave her a congratulatory embrace. "Lord Mortimer is worthy of you, my child," said the Prioress, "and that is the highest eulogium I can pass on him." After commenting upon different parts of the letter, she asked Amanda, a little archly, "whether she intended sending an express command to his Lordship against coming early in the morning?" Amanda honestly confessed she had no such intention, and expressed her wish to behold him. The Prioress said she would have breakfast prepared for them in the garden parlour, and

and that she would take care they should not be interrupted. She also promised to keep every thing secret till all matters were arranged for Amanda's removal from St. Catherine's.

CHAP. VI.

Thus let me hold thee to my heart,

And every care resign ;

And shall we never—never part,

Oh ! thou my all that's mine.

GOLDSMITH.

JOY is as great an enemy to repose as anxiety. Amanda passed an almost sleepless night, but her thoughts were too agreeably employed to allow her to suffer for want of rest, early as she arose in the morning, she was but a short time in the parlour before Lord Mortimer arrived. He appeared

appeared with all the transports of his soul beaming from his eyes, and was received by Amanda with tender and trembling emotion. He caught her to his heart as a treasure restored to him by the immediate hand of Heaven. He pressed her to it with silent ecstasy. Both for a few moments were unable to speak; but the tears which burst from Amanda, and those that dropped on the glowing cheeks of Lord Mortimer, expressed their feelings more forcibly than any language could have done.

Amanda at length found utterance, and began to thank his Lordship for all the difficulties he had gone through in vindicating her fame. He hastily stopped those effusions of gratitude, by bidding her ask her heart whether he had not been serving himself as well as her by what he had done.

From the soft confusion, into which his transports threw her, Amanda endeavoured to recover herself by repairing to the breakfast table, on which the good sisters had spread all the niceties (adapted for a morning repast) which the Convent could produce; but her hand was unsteady, she spilt the tea in pouring it out, and committed twenty blunders in helping Lord Mortimer. He laughed a little archly at her embarrassment, and insisted on doing the honours of the table himself, to which
Amanda,

Amanda, with a deep blush,⁴ consented ; but breakfast was little attended to. Amanda's hand was detained in Lord Mortimer's, while his eyes were continually turning towards her, as if to assure his heart that, in the lovely evidence of his happiness, there was no deception; and the tenderness Amanda had no longer reason to restrain beamed from her looks, which also evinced her perfect sensibility of her present felicity—a felicity heightened by her approving conscience testifying she had merited it. The pure, the delightful satisfaction resulting from this reflection gave such radiance to her complexion, that Lord Mortimer repeatedly declared her residence at St. Catherine's had made her more beautiful than ever. Twelve o'clock struck, and found them still loitering over the breakfast table. — “ The Nuns will think we have made a tolerable feast,” cried Lord Mortimer, smiling, while Amanda arose with precipitation. “ I need not,” continued he following her, “ like Sterne, ask nature what has made the meal so delicious : I need only ask my own heart, and it will inform me love and tenderness.”—Amanda blushed, and they went together into the garden. She would have walked before the windows of the Convent, but Lord Mortimer forced her gently into a dark sequestered alley : Here their conversation became more connected

nected than it had been hitherto ; the generous intentions of Lady Martha Dormer, and the arrangements she had made for the reception and nuptials of Amanda, were talked over, the marriage was to take place at Thornbury, Lady Martha's seat ; they were to continue there for a month after its solemnization, and from thence to go to an estate of Lord Cherbury's for the remainder of the summer ; a house in one of the squares was to be taken and prepared for their residence in winter, and Lady Martha Dormer had promised, whenever she came to town, which was but seldom, she would make their house her home, provided they would promise to spend every Christmas, and three months at least in summer, with her at Thornbury ; Lord Mortimer said he had his choice of any of the Earl's seats, but chose none, from an idea of the hall being more agreeable to Amanda.—She assured him it was, and he proceeded to mention the presents which Lady Martha had prepared for her ; also the carriages and retinue he had provided, and expected to find at Thornbury against she reached it, still asking if the arrangements he had made met her approbation ?

Amanda was affected even to tears, by the solicitude he shewed to please her, and he perceiving
her

her emotions, changed the discourse to speak about her removal from St. Catherine's; he entreated her not to delay it longer than was absolutely necessary to adjust matters for it. She promised compliance to this entreaty, acknowledging that she but obeyed her inclinations in doing so, as she longed to be presented to her generous patroness, Lady Martha, and to her amiable and beloved Lady Araminta.

Lord Mortimer, delicately considerate about all which concerned her, begged she would speak to the Prioress to procure a decent female, who should be a proper attendant for her in her journey; they should travel together in one chaise, and he would follow them in another. Amanda promised she would lose no time in making this request, which, she had no doubt, would be successful.

Lord Mortimer presented her with a very beautiful embroidered purse, containing notes to the amount of five hundred pounds. Amanda blushed deeply, and felt her feelings a little hurt at the idea of being obliged to Lord Mortimer for every thing. He pressed her hand, and, in a voice of soothing tenderness, told her he should be offended if she did not from this moment consider her interest inseparable from his. The notes he said of right belonged to her, as they amounted to but
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the individual sum he had already devoted to her use. He requested she would not curb in the least her generous spirit ; but fulfil, in the utmost extent, all the claims which gratitude had upon her. The benevolent sisters of St. Catherine's were the foremost in the list of those who had conferred obligations upon her, and he desired she would not only reward them liberally at present, but promise them an annual stipend of fifty pounds.

Amanda was truly delighted at this, to be able to contribute to the comfort of those who had so largely promoted her's, was a source of exquisite felicity. Lord Mortimer presented her with his picture, which he had drawn in London for that purpose ; it was a striking likeness, and most elegantly set with brilliants, which formed a cypher upon a plait of hair at the back : This was indeed a precious present to Amanda, and she acknowledged it was such. Lord Mortimer said, that, "in return for it, he should expect her's at some future time ;" but added, smiling, "I shall not heed the shadow till I procure the substance." He also gave her a very beautiful ring, with an emblematical device, and adorned in the same manner as his picture, which Lady Martha had sent as a pledge of future friendship, and he now informed her,
"that

“that her Ladyship, accompanied by Lady Araminta, intended meeting them at Holyhead, that all due honour and attention might be paid to her adopted daughter.”

In the midst of their conversation the dinner bell rang from the Convent. Amanda started, and declared she had not supposed it half so late. — The arch smile, which this speech occasioned in Lord Mortimer, instantly made her perceive it had been a tacit confession of the pleasure she enjoyed in their tête-à-tête.

She blushed, and telling him she could not stay another moment, was hurrying away. He hastily caught her, and holding both her hands, declared she should not depart, neither would he to his solitary dinner, till she promised he might return to her early in the evening. To this she consented, provided he allowed her to have the Priorefs and sister Mary at least at tea. This was a condition Lord Mortimer by no means liked to agree to, and he endeavoured to prevail on her to drop it; but finding her inflexible, he said she was a provoking girl, and asked her if she was not afraid that, when he had the power, he would retaliate upon her for all the trials she had put his patience to; but since she would have it so, why it must be so to be sure, he said; but he hoped the good
Ladies

Ladies would have too much conscience to sit out the whole evening with them. That was all chance Amanda said. The bell again rang, and he was forced to depart.

She took the opportunity of being alone with the Prioress for a few minutes, to speak to her about procuring a female to attend her in her journey. The Prioress said, she doubted not but she could procure her an eligible person from the neighbouring town, and promised to write there that very evening, to a family who would be able to assist her inquiries.

Both she and sister Mary were much pleased by being invited to drink tea with Lord Mortimer. — He came even earlier than was expected. Poor Amanda was terrified, lest her companions should over-hear him repeatedly asking her whether they would not retire immediately after tea? Though not over-heard, the Prioress had too much sagacity not to know her departure was desired; she therefore, under pretence of business, retired, and brought Mary along with her.

Amanda and Lord Mortimer went into the garden. He thanked her for not losing time in speaking to the Prioress about a servant, and said, that he hoped, at the end of the week at farthest, she would be ready to begin her journey. Amanda readily

readily promised to use all possible dispatch. They passed some delightful hours in rambling about the garden, and talking over their felicity.

The Prioress's expectation was answered relative to a servant; in the course of two days she produced one in every respect agreeable to Amanda, and things were now in such forwardness for her departure, that she expected it would take place as soon as Lord Mortimer had mentioned. His time was passed almost continually at St. Catherine's, never leaving it except at dinner-time, when he went to Castle Carberry: His residence there was soon known, and visitors and invitations without number came to the Castle, but he found means of avoiding them.

Amanda laughing, would often tell him he retarded the preparations for her journey by being always with her; this, he said, was only a pretext to drive him away, for that he rather forwarded them by letting her lose no time.

Lord Mortimer, on coming to Amanda one evening as usual, appeared uncommonly discomposed, his face was flushed, and his whole manner betrayed agitation. He scarcely noticed Amanda; but seating himself, placed his arm upon a table, and leaned his head dejectedly upon it. Amanda was inexpressibly shocked, her heart panted with apprehension

apprehension of ill, but she felt too timid to make any inquiry. He suddenly knit his brows, and muttered between his teeth, "Curse on the wretch."

Amanda could no longer keep silence: "What wretch?" she exclaimed, "or what is the meaning of this disorder?"

"First tell me, Amanda," said he, looking very steadfastly at her, "have you seen any stranger here lately?"

"Good Heaven!" replied she, "what can you mean by such a question? But I solemnly assure you I have not."

"Enough," said he, "such an assurance restores me to quiet; but, my dear Amanda," coming over to her, and taking her hands in his, "since you have perceived my agitation I must account to you for it. I have just seen Belgrave; he was but a few yards from me on the Common when I saw him; but the mean, despicable wretch, loaded as he is with conscious guilt, durst not face me; he got out of my way by leaping over the hedge, which divides the Common from a lane with many intricate windings: I endeavoured, but without success, to discover the one he had retreated through."

"I see," said Amanda, pale and trembling, "he is destined to make me wretched. I had hoped

indeed that Lord Mortimer would no more have suffered his quiet to be interrupted by him ; it implies such a doubt," said she, weeping, " as shocks my soul ! If suspicion is thus continually to be revived, we had better separate at once, for misery must be the consequence of an union without mutual confidence."

" Gracious Heaven !" said Lord Mortimer, " how unfortunate I am to give you pain ! You mistake entirely, indeed, my dearest Amanda, the cause of my uneasiness ; I swear by all that is sacred, no doubt, no suspicion of your worth, has arisen in my mind. No man can think more highly of a woman than I do of you ; but I was disturbed lest this wretch should have forced himself into your presence, and lest you, through apprehensions for me, concealed it from me."

This explanation calmed the perturbations of Amanda ; as an atonement for the uneasiness he had given her, she wanted Lord Mortimer to promise he would not endeavour to discover Belgrave. This promise he avoided giving, and Amanda was afraid of pressing it, lest the spark of jealousy, which she was convinced existed in the disposition of Lord Mortimer, should be blown into a flame ; that Belgrave would studiously avoid him she trusted, and she resolved, that if the things
that

that she had deemed it necessary to order from the neighbouring town, were not finished, to wait no longer for them, as she longed now more than ever to quit a place she thought dangerous to Lord Mortimer. The ensuing morning, instead of seeing his Lordship at breakfast, a note was brought to her, couched in these words:

TO MISS FITZALAN.

“ I am unavoidably prevented from waiting on my dear Amanda this morning, but in the course of the day she may depend on either seeing or hearing from me again. She can have no excuse now on my account about not hastening the preparations for her journey, and when we meet, if I find that her time has not been employed to this purpose, she may expect a severe chiding from her faithful

MORTIMER.”

This note filled Amanda with the most alarming disquiet; it was evident to her that he was gone in pursuit of Belgrave. She ran into the hall to inquire of the messenger about his master, but he was gone. She then hastened to the Prioress, and communicated her apprehensions to her. —

The Prioress endeavoured to calm them, by assuring her she might be convinced that Belgrave had taken too many precautions to be discovered.

Amanda's breakfast however remained untouched, and her things unpacked, and she continued the whole morning the picture of anxiety, impatiently expecting the promised visit or letter; neither came, and she resolved to send after dinner the old gardener to Castle Carberry to inquire about Lord Mortimer. While she was speaking to him for that purpose the maid followed her into the garden, and told her there was a messenger in the parlour from Lord Mortimer. She flew thither, but what words can express her surprise, when the supposed messenger raising a large hat, which shadowed his face, and removing a handkerchief which he had hitherto held up to it, discovered to her view the features of Lord Cherbury. She could only exclaim, "Gracious Heaven! has any thing happened to Lord Mortimer?" ere she sunk into a chair in breathless agitation.

CHAP. VII.

My heavy heart,
The prophets of woe, foretells some ill
At hand.

LORD CHERBURY hastened to support and calm her agitation, by assuring her Lord Mortimer was in perfect safety. Recovering a little by this assertion, she asked him "how he was assured of this? He answered, "because he had seen him, though without being perceived by him, about an hour ago." Amanda, restored to her faculties, by being assured he was uninjured, began to reflect on the suddenness of Lord Cherbury's visit. She would have flattered herself he came to introduce her to his family himself, had not his looks almost forbid such an idea; they were

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gloomy

gloomy and disordered, his eyes were fastened on her, yet he appeared unwilling to speak.

Amanda felt herself in too awkward and embarrassing a situation to break the unpleasant silence. At last Lord Cherbury suddenly exclaimed: "Lord Mortimer does not, nor must not, know of my being here."

"Must not," repeated Amanda, in inconceivable astonishment.

"Gracious Heaven!" said Lord Cherbury, starting from the chair on which he had thrown himself opposite to her, "how shall I begin, how shall I tell her? Oh! Miss Fitzalan," he continued approaching her, "I have much to say, and you have much to hear, which will shock you. I believed I could better in an interview have informed you of particulars, but I find I was mistaken; I will write to you."

"My Lord," cried Amanda, rising, all pale and trembling, "tell me now, to leave me in suspense, after receiving such dreadful hints, would be cruelty. Oh! surely, if Lord Mortimer be safe—if Lady Martha Dormer—if Lady Ariminta is well—I can have nothing so very shocking to hear."

"Alas!" replied he, mournfully, shaking his head, "you are mistaken; be satisfied, however, that the friends you have mentioned are all well."

I have said I would write to you. Can you meet me this evening amongst the ruins?" Amanda gave an assenting bow. "I shall then," pursued he, "have a letter ready to deliver you. In the mean time I must inform you, no person in the world knows of my visit here but yourself, and of all beings Lord Mortimer is the last I should wish to know it. Remember then, Miss Fitzalan," taking her hand, which he grasped with violence, as if to impress his words upon her heart, "remember, that on your secrecy every thing most estimable in life, even life itself, perhaps, depends."

With these dreadful and mysterious words he departed, leaving Amanda a picture of horror and surprise; it was many minutes ere she moved from the attitude in which he left her, and when she did, it was only to walk in a disordered manner about the room, repeating his dreadful words. He was come perhaps to part her and Lord Mortimer, and yet, after consenting to their union, surely Lord Cherbury could not be guilty of such treachery and deceit; yet, if this was not the case, why conceal his coming to Ireland from Lord Mortimer? Why let it be known only to her? And what could be the secrets of dreadful import he had to communicate?

From these self-interrogations, in which her reason was almost bewildered, the entrance of the Prioress drew her.

She started at seeing the pale and distracted looks of Amanda, and asked, "if she had heard any bad tidings of Lord Mortimer?"

Amanda sighed heavily at this question, and said, "No—the secrecy she had been enjoined, she durst not violate, by mentioning the mysterious visit to her friend; unable, however, to converse on any other subject, she resolved to retire to her chamber. She placed her illness and agitation to the account of Lord Mortimer, and said a little rest was absolutely necessary for her, and begged, if his Lordship came in the course of the evening, he might be told she was too ill to see him."

The Prioress pressed her to stay for tea. She refused, and as she retired from the room, desired nothing might be said of the person, who had just seen her, to Lord Mortimer; saying, with a faint smile, "she would not make him vain by letting him know of her anxiety about him." — She retired to her chamber, and endeavoured to controul her perturbations, that she might be the better enabled to support what she had so much reason to apprehend." Neither the Prioress nor the Nuns, in obedience to her injunctions, intruded upon

upon her, and at the appointed hour she softly opened the chamber door, and, every place being clear, stole softly from the Convent.

She found Lord Cherbury waiting for her amidst the solitary ruins. He had a letter in his hand, which he presented to her the moment she appeared.

"In this letter, Miss Fitzalan," said he, "I have opened to you my whole heart: I have disburthened it of secrets which have long oppressed it; I have entrusted my honour to your care. From what I have said, that its contents are of a sacred nature, you may believe, should they be considered in any other light by you, the consequence may, nay, must be fatal." He said this with a sternness which made Amanda shrink. "Meditate well on the contents of that letter, Miss Fitzalan," continued he, with a voice of deep solemnity, "for it is a letter which will fix your destiny and mine; even should the request contained in it be refused, let me be the first acquainted with the refusal;—then indeed I shall urge you no more to secrecy, for what will follow in consequence of such a refusal, must divulge all."

"Oh! tell me, tell me," said Amanda, catching hold of his arm, "tell me what is the request, or

what it is I am to fear: Oh! tell me all at once, and rid me of the torturing suspense I endure."

"I cannot," he cried, "indeed I cannot. To-morrow night I shall expect your answer here at the same hour."

At this moment Lord Mortimer's voice calling upon Amanda was heard. Lord Cherbury dropped her hand which he had taken, and instantly retired amongst the windings of the pile, from whence Lord Mortimer soon appeared, giving Amanda only time to hide the fatal letter.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed he, "what could have brought you hither, and who was the person who just departed from you?" It was well for Amanda that the twilight gave but an imperfect view of her face; she felt her colour come and go; a cold dew overspread her forehead; she leaned against a rude fragment of the building, and faintly exclaimed, "the person." —

"Yes," said Lord Mortimer, "I am sure I heard retreating footsteps."

"You are mistaken," repeated Amanda, in the same faint accent.

"Well," said he, "though you may dispute the evidence of my ears, you cannot the evidence of my eyes; I see you here, and I am astonished at it."

"I

"I came here for air," said Amanda.

"For air!" repeated Lord Mortimer, "I own I should have thought the garden better adapted for such a purpose; but why come hither in a clandestine manner? Why, if you have the fears you would persuade me you have, expose yourself to danger from the wretch who haunts the place by coming here alone. When I went to the Convent I was told you were indisposed, and could not be disturbed: I could not depart, however, without making an effort to see you; but you can easier imagine than I describe, the consternation I felt when you could not be found; it was wrong, indeed, Amanda, it was wrong to come here alone, and affect concealment."

"Gracious Heaven!" said Amanda, raising her hands and eyes, and bursting into tears, "how wretched am I!"

She was indeed at this moment superlatively wretched; her heart was oppressed by the dread of evil, and she perceived suspicions in Lord Mortimer which she could not attempt to remove, least an intimation of the secret she was so awfully enjoined to keep should escape.

"Ah! Amanda," said Lord Mortimer, losing in a moment the asperity with which he had addressed her at first, "ah! Amanda, like the rest of your sex,

you know too well the power of your tears not to use them. Forget, or at least forgive, all I have said. I was disappointed in not seeing you the moment I expected, and that put me out of temper. I know I am too impetuous, but you will in time subdue every unruly passion; I put myself into your hands, and you shall make me what you please."

He now pressed her to his bosom, and finding her tremble universally, again implored her forgiveness, as he imputed the agitation she betrayed entirely to the uneasiness he had given her. She assured him, with a faltering voice, he had not offended her. Her spirits were affected, she said, by all she had suffered during the day, Lord Mortimer placing, as she wished, those sufferings to his own account, declared her anxiety at once pained and pleased him, adding, he would truly confess what detained him from her during the day, as soon as they returned to the Convent.

Their return to it relieved the sisterhood, who had also been seeking Amanda, from many apprehensions. The Prioress and sister Mary followed them into the parlour, where Lord Mortimer begged "they would have compassion on him, and give him something for his supper, as he had scarcely eaten any thing the whole day."

Sister

Sister Mary instantly replied, "He should be gratified, as Amanda was in the same predicament, and she hoped he would be now able to prevail on her to eat." The cloth was accordingly laid, and a few trifles placed upon it. Sister Mary would gladly have staid, but the Prioress had understanding enough to think the supper would be more palatable if they were absent, and accordingly retired.

Lord Mortimer now, with the most soothing tenderness, tried to cheer his fair companion, and make her take some refreshment; but his efforts for either of those purposes were unsuccessful, and she besought him not to think her obstinate, if she could not in a moment recover her spirits; to divert his attention a little from herself, she asked him to perform his promise, by relating what had kept him the whole day from St. Catherine's.

He now acknowledged "he had been in search of Belgrave; but the precautions he had taken to conceal himself baffled all inquiries, which convinces me," continued Lord Mortimer, "if I wanted conviction about such a matter, that he has not yet dropped his villainous designs upon you: but the wretch cannot always escape the vengeance he merits."

"May he never," cried Amanda, fervently, yet involuntarily, "meet it from your hands."

"We will drop that part of the subject," said Lord Mortimer, "if you please. You must know," continued he, "after scouring the whole neighbourhood, I fell in about four miles hence with a gentleman, who had visited at the Marquis of Rosline's last summer: He immediately asked me to accompany him home to dinner. From his residence in the country I thought it probable he might be able to give some account of Belgrave, and therefore accepted the invitation, but my inquiries were as fruitless here as elsewhere. When I found it so I was on thorns to depart, particularly as all the gentlemen were set in for drinking, and feared I might be thrown into an improper situation to visit my Amanda: I was on the watch, however, and, to use their sporting term, literally stole away."

"Thank Heaven!" said Amanda, "your inquiries proved fruitless. Oh! never, never repeat them; think no more about a wretch so despicable."

"Well," cried Lord Mortimer, "why don't you hurry me from the neighbourhood; fix the day, the moment, for our departure: I have been here already five days. Lady Martha's patience is, I dare say, quite exhausted by this time, and should we delay much longer, I suppose, she will think we have both become converts to the holy rites of this Convent, and that I, instead of taking
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the vows, which should make me a joyful bridegroom, am about taking those which shall doom me to celibacy; seriously, what but want of inclination can longer detain you?"

"Ah!" said Amanda, "you know too well that my departure cannot be retarded by want of inclination."

"Then why not decide immediately upon the day?" Amanda was silent; her situation was agonizing; how could she fix upon a day, uncertain whether she did not possess a letter which would prevent her ever taking the projected journey?"

"Well," said Lord Mortimer, after allowing her some time to speak, "I see I must fix the day myself; this is Tuesday—let it be Thursday."

"Let us drop the subject this night, my Lord," said Amanda, "I am really ill, and only wait for your departure to retire to rest."

Lord Mortimer obeyed her, but with reluctance, and soon after retired.

 C H A P. VIII.

As one condemn'd to leap a precipice,
 Who sees before his eyes the depth below,
 Stops short, and looks about for some kind shrub
 To break his dreadful fall,

DRYDEN.

AMANDA went to her chamber the moment Lord Mortimer departed; the Nuns were already retired to rest, so that the stillness which reigned through the house added to the awfulness of her feelings, as she sat down to peruse a letter which she had been previously informed would fix her fate.

TO MISS FITZALAN,

"To destroy a prospect of felicity, at the very moment its enveloping glooms are dispersed, is indeed

indeed the source of pangs most dreadful ; yet such are the horrors of my destiny, that nothing but intervening between you, Mortimer and happiness, can save me from perdition. Appalled at this dreadful assertion, the letter drops from your trembling hands ; but oh, dear Miss Fitzalan, cast it not utterly aside till you peruse the rest of the contents, and fix the destiny of the most wretched of mankind, wretched in thinking he shall interrupt not only your peace, but the peace of a son, so noble, so gracious, so idolized, as Mortimer is by him ; but I will not longer torture your feelings by keeping you in suspense ; the preface I have already given is sufficient, and I will be explicit : Gambling, that bane of fame and fortune, has been my ruin ; but whilst I indulged, so well did I conceal my propensity for it, that even those I called my friends were ignorant of it. With shame I confess I was ever foremost to rail against this vice, which was continually drawing sums in secret from me, that would have given comfort and affluence to many a child of want for some time ; my good and bad fortune were so equal, that my income suffered no considerable diminution. About five years ago a Mr. Freelove, a particular friend of mine, died, and left to my care his only son, who, I dare say, you may re-
collect

collect having seen at my house last winter : This young man's property was consigned to my care, to manage as much for his advantage as I could ; it consisted of a large estate, and fifty thousand pounds. At the period Freelove became my ward, I had had a constant run of ill luck for many months. The ardour of gaming (unlike every other passion) is rather increased than diminished by disappointment: Without being warned therefore by ill success I still went on, till all I could touch of my own property was gone. Did I then retire ashamed of my folly?—No—I could not bear to do so, without another effort for recovering my losses, and in that effort risked something more precious than I had ever yet done—namely, my honour, by using the money which lay in my hands belonging to Freelove ; the long period, which was to elapse ere he came of age, emboldened me to this. Ere that period I trusted I should have retrieved my losses, and be enabled not only to discharge the principal, but whatever interest it would have brought, if applied to another purpose. I followed the bent of my evil genius, sum after sum taken up, and all alike buried in the accursed vortex which had already swallowed so much from me ! But when I found
all

all was gone, oh, Miss Fitzalan ! I still tremble at the distraction of that moment.

“ All, I have before said, that I could touch of my property was gone, the remainder was so settled, I had no power over it, except joined by my son. Great as was the injury he would sustain by mortgaging it, I was confident he never would hesitate doing so if acquainted with my distress ; but to let him know it was worse than a death of torture could be to me, his early excellence, the nobleness of his principles, mingled in the love I felt for him a degree of awe ; to confess myself a villain to such a character, to acknowledge my life had been a scene of deceit ; to be abashed, confounded in the presence of my son, to meet his piercing eye, to see the blush of shame mantle his cheeks for a father's crimes—oh horrible !—most horrible ! I raved at the idea, and resolved, if driven by necessity to tell him of my baseness, not to survive the confession. At this critical juncture the Marquis of Rosline came from Scotland to reside in London ; an intimacy which had been dormant for years between our families was then revived, and I soon found that an alliance between them would be pleasing. The prospect of it raised me from the very depth of despair ; but my transports were of short continuance, for

Mortimer

Mortimer not only shewed, but expressed the strongest repugnance to such a connexion.

“ Time and daily experience I trusted would so forcibly convince him of the advantages of it, as at last to conquer this repugnance; nor did the hope of an alliance taking place entirely forsake my heart, till informed that his was already bestowed upon another object. My feelings at this information I shall not attempt to describe; all hope of saving myself from dishonour was now cut off, for though dutiful and attentive to me in the highest degree, I could not flatter myself that Mortimer would blindly sacrifice his reason and inclination to my will, the most fatal intentions again took possession of my mind, but the uncertainties he suffered on your account kept me in horrible suspense as to their execution; after some months of torture I began again to revive, by learning that you and Mortimer were inevitably separated, and such is the selfish nature of vice, so abandoned is it to all feelings of humanity, that I rather rejoiced at than lamented the supposed disgrace of the daughter of my friend.

“ But the persevering constancy of Mortimer rather let me say the immediate interposition of Providence soon gave her reason to triumph over the arts of her enemies, and I was again reduced to

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to despair. Mortimer, I dare say, from motives of delicacy, has concealed from you the opposition I gave to his wishes after your innocence was cleared, and the intentions of Lady Martha Dormer relative to you were made known, at last I found I must either seem to acquiesce in these wishes and intentions, or divulge my real motive for opposing them, or else quarrel with my son and sister, and appear in their eyes the most selfish of human beings: I therefore, to appearance, acquiesced, but resolved in reality to throw myself upon your mercy, believing that a character so tender, so perfect, so heroic-like, as yours has been through every scene of distress, would have compassion on a fallen fellow creature. Was my situation otherwise than it now is, were you even portionless, I should rejoice at having you united to my family from your own intrinsic merit. — Situated as I now am, the fortune Lady Martha Dormer proposes giving you can be of no consequence to me; the projected match between you and Mortimer is yet a secret from the public, of course it has not lessened his interest with the Rosline family. I have already been so fortunate as to adjust the unlucky difference which took place between them, and remove any resentment they entertained against him, and I am confident the
first

first overture he should make for an union with Lady Euphrasia would be successful, the fortune which would immediately be received with her is sixty thousand pounds, and five thousand a year; the first would be given up to me in place of the settlement I should make on Lord Mortimer, so that you see, my dear Miss Fitzalan, his marriage with Lady Euphrasia would at once extricate me from all my difficulties. Freeloze in a few months will be of age, and the smallest delay in settling with him, after he attains that period, must brand me with dishonour.

“ I stand upon the verge of a dreadful abyss, and it is in your power only to preserve me from plunging into it: You, who like an angel of mercy, may bid me live, and save me from destruction, yet think not in resigning Lord Mortimer, if indeed such a resignation should take place, you sacrifice your own interest—No—it shall be my grateful care to secure to you independence, and I am confident, among the many men you must meet sensible of your worth, and enraptured with your charms, you may yet select one as calculated to render you happy as Mortimer, while he, disappointed of the object of his affections, will (I have no doubt, without longer hesitation)

hesitation) accept the one I shall again propose to him.

“ But should you determine on giving him up, you ask how, and by what means, you can break with him after what has passed, without revealing your real motive for doing so to him.

“ That is indeed a difficulty; but after going so far, I must not hesitate in telling you how it can be removed. You must retire secretly from his knowledge, and leave no clue behind by which you can be traced. If you comply with the first of my requests, but stop short here, you will defeat all that your mercy, your pity, your compassion, would do to save me, since the consequence of any hesitation must be a full explanation, and I have already said it, and now repeat it in the most solemn manner, that I will not survive the divulgement of my secret, for never, no, never will I live humbled in the eyes of my son; if then you comply, comply not in part. Pardon me, dear Miss Fitzalan, if you think there is any thing arbitrary in my stile, I would have softened, if I could, all I had to say; but the time, the danger, the necessity, urged me to be explicit. I have now to you, as to a superior Being, opened my whole heart; it rests with you whether I shall live to atone for my follies, or by one desperate action terminate

terminate them. Should you shew me mercy, unworthy as I am of it, should you, in compassion to poor Mortimer, comply with a request, which can only save him from the pangs he would feel at a father's quitting life unbidden, my gratitude, my admiration, my protection, whilst I live will be yours, and the first act of my restored life will be to secure you a competence. I shall wait with trembling anxiety for your appearance to-morrow night ; till then believe me

Your sincere, tho' most unhappy Friend,

CHERBURY."

"The fatal letter fell from Amanda, a mist overspread her eyes, and she sunk senseless on her chair ; but the privation of her misery was of short duration, and she recovered as if from a dreadful dream ; she felt cold, trembling, and terrified ; she looked round the room with an eye of apprehension and dismay, bewildered as to the cause of her wretchedness and terror, till the letter at her feet again struck her sight.

" Was there no way," she asked herself, as she again examined the contents, " was there no way by which the dreadful sacrifice it doomed her to
4 could

could be avoided?" Lady Martha and Lord Mortimer would unite their efforts to save the honour of their wretched relative, they would soothe his feelings, they would compassionate his failings, they would —; but she started in the midst of these ideas, started as from ideas fraught with guilt and horror: As those fatal words rushed upon her mind—"I will not survive the divulgement of my secret," and she found that to save the father she must resign the son.

How unworthy of such a sacrifice, engaged as she was to Lord Mortimer! She began to doubt whether she had a right to make it. What a doubt! She shuddered for having conceived it, and reproached herself for yielding a moment to the suggestions of tenderness which had given rise to it. She resolved, without a farther struggle, to submit to reason and to virtue, convinced that, if accessary to Lord Cherbury's death, nothing could assuage her wretchedness, and that the unhappiness Lord Mortimer would suffer at losing her would be trifling, compared to that he would feel if he lost his father by an act of suicide.

"In my fate," exclaimed she, in the low and broken accent of despair, "there is no alternative! I submit to it without a farther struggle. I dare not call upon one being to advise me: I resign

resign him therefore," she continued; as if Lord Cherbury was really present to hear her resignation; "I resign Lord Mortimer; but oh, my God!" raising her hands with agony to Heaven, "give me fortitude to bear the horrors of my situation. Oh, Mortimer! dear, invaluable Mortimer! the hand of Fate is against our union, and we must part, never, never more to meet! From the imputation of ingratitude and guilt I shall not be allowed to vindicate myself: No, I am completely the victim of Lord Cherbury—the cruel, perfidious Cherbury, whose treachery, whose seeming acquiescence in the wishes of his son has given me joy but to render my misery more acute!

"That Lord Mortimer would impute withdrawing herself from him to an attachment for Belgrave she was convinced, and that her fame, as well as peace, should be sacrificed to Lord Cherbury, caused such a whirl of contending passions in her mind, that reason and reflection for a few minutes yielded to their violence, and she resolved to vindicate herself to Lord Mortimer. This resolution, however, was of short continuance, as her subsiding passions again gave her power to reflect, she was convinced that by trying to clear herself of an imaginary crime she should commit a real one, since, to save her own character, Lord Cherbury's

Cherbury's must be stigmatized, and the consequence of such an act he had already declared, so that, not only by the world but by her own conscience, she should for ever be accused of accelerating his death.

"It must, it must be made," she wildly cried, "the sacrifice must be made, and Mortimer is lost to me for ever." She flung herself on the bed, and passed the hours till morning in agonies too great for description. From a kind of stupefaction rather than sleep, into which she had gradually sunk towards morning, she was roused by a gentle tap at her chamber door, and the voice of Sister Mary informing her that Lord Mortimer was below, and impatient for his breakfast.

Amanda started from the bed, and bid her tell his Lordship she would attend him immediately.—She then adjusted her dress, tried to calm her spirits, and, with uplifted hands and eyes, besought Heaven to support her through the trials of the day.

Weak and trembling she descended to the parlour. The moment she entered it, Lord Mortimer shocked and surprised by her altered looks, exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven! what is the matter?" Then feeling the feverish heat of her hands continued, "Why, why, Amanda, had you the cruelty

to conceal your illness? proper assistance might have prevented its increasing to such a degree."— With unutterable tenderness he folded his arms about her, and, while her drooping head sunk on his bosom, declared he would immediately send for the physician who had before attended her.

"Do not," said Amanda, while tears trickled down her cheeks, "Do not," continued she, in a broken voice, "for he could do me no good."

"No good!" repeated Lord Mortimer, in a terrified accent.

"I mean," cried she, recollecting herself, "he would find it unnecessary to prescribe any thing for me, as my illness only proceeds from the agitation I suffered yesterday; it made me pass an indifferent night, but quietness to day will recover me."

Lord Mortimer was with difficulty persuaded to give up his intention; nor would he relinquish it, till she had promised, if not better before the evening, to inform him, and let the physician be sent for.

They now sat down to breakfast, at which Amanda was unable either to preside or eat. — When over, she told Lord Mortimer she must retire to her chamber, as rest was essential for her; but between nine and ten in the evening she would be

be happy to see him. He tried to persuade her that she might rest as well upon the sofa in the parlour as in her chamber, and that he might then be allowed to sit with her; but she could not be persuaded to this, she said, and begged he would excuse seeing her till the time she had already mentioned.

He at last retired with great reluctance, but not till she had several times desired him to do so.

Amanda now repaired to her chamber, but not to indulge in the supineness of grief, though her heart felt bursting, but to settle upon some plan for her future conduct. In the first place she immediately meant to write to Lord Cherbury, as the best method she could take of acquainting him with her compliance, and preventing any conversation between them, which would now have been insupportable to her.

In the next place she designed acquainting the Prioress with the sudden alteration in her affairs, only concealing from her the occasion of that alteration, and as but one day intervened between the present and the one fixed for her journey, meant to beseech her to think of some place to which she might retire from Lord Mortimer.

Yet such was the opinion she knew the Prioress entertained of Lord Mortimer, that she almost

dreaded she would impute her resignation of him to some criminal motive, and abandon her entirely. If this should be the case (and scarcely could she be surprised if it was) she resolved without delay to go privately to the neighbouring town, and from thence proceed immediately to Dublin; how she should act there, or what would become of her, never entered her thoughts; they were wholly engrossed about the manner in which she should leave St. Catherine's.

But she hoped, much as appearances were against her, she should not be deserted by the Prioress: Providence, she trusted, would be so compassionate to her misery, as to preserve her this one friend, who could not only assist but advise her.

As soon as she had settled the line of conduct she should pursue, she sat down to pen her renunciation of Lord Mortimer, which she did in the following words:

TO THE EARL OF CHERBURY.

"MY LORD,

"To your wishes I resign my happiness; my happiness I repeat, for it is due to Lord Mortimer to declare, that an union with such a character as
his

his must have produced the highest felicity: It is also due to my own to declare, that it was neither his rank or fortune, but his virtues, which influenced my inclination in his favour.

“ Happy had it been for us all, my Lord, but particularly for me, had you continued steady in opposing the wishes of your son. My reverence for paternal authority is too great ever to have allowed me to act in opposition to it: I should not then, by your seeming acquiescence to them, have been tempted to think my trials all over.

But I will not do away any little merit your Lordship may perhaps ascribe to my immediate compliance with your request, by dwelling upon the sufferings it entails on me. May the renunciation of my hopes be the means of realizing your Lordship's, and may superior fortune bring superior happiness to Lord Mortimer.

“ I thank your Lordship for your intentions relative to me; but whilst I do so, must assure you, both now and for ever, I shall decline having them executed for me.

“ I shall not disguise the truth; it would not be in your Lordship's power to recompense the sacrifice I have made you, and besides, pecuniary obligations can never sit easy upon a feeling mind,

except they are conferred by those we know value us, and whom we value ourselves.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

AMANDA FITZALAN."

The tears she had with difficulty restrained while writing now burst forth. She rose, and walked to the window, to try if the air would remove the faintishness which oppressed her; from it she perceived Lord Mortimer and the Prioress in deep conversation at a little distance from the Convent; she conjectured she was their subject, for as Lord Mortimer retired, the Prioress, whom she had not seen that day before, came into her chamber. After the usual salutations, "Lord Mortimer has been telling me you were ill," said she: "I trusted a lover's fears had magnified the danger; but truly, my dear child, I am sorry to say this is not the case; tell me, my dear, what is the matter? surely now, more than ever, you should be careful of your health."

"Oh! no," said Amanda, with a convulsive sob—"Oh! no," wringing her hands, "you are
sadly

sadly mistaken. The Prioress grew alarmed, her limbs began to tremble, she was unable to stand, and, dropping on the nearest chair, besought Amanda, in a voice expressive of her feelings, "to explain the reason of her distress."

Amanda knelt before her, she took her hands, she pressed them to her burning forehead and lips, and bedewed them with her tears, while she exclaimed "she was wretched."

"Wretched!" repeated the Prioress; "for Heaven's sake be explicit; keep me no longer in suspense; you sicken my very heart by your agitation; it foretells something dreadful!"

"It does, indeed," said Amanda; "it foretells that Lord Mortimer and I will never be united!"

The Prioress started, and surveyed Amanda with a look which seemed to say, "she believed she had lost her senses;" then, with assumed composure, begged "she would defer any farther explanation of her distress till her spirits were in a calmer state."

"I will not rise," cried Amanda, taking the Prioress's hand, which in her surprise she had involuntarily withdrawn—"I will not rise till you say, that, notwithstanding the mysterious situation in which I am involved, you will continue to be
H 4 my

my friend. Oh! such an assurance would assuage the sorrows of my heart."

The Prioress now perceived that it was grief alone which disordered Amanda; but how she had met with any cause for grief, or what could occasion it, were matters of astonishment to her. Surely, my dear child," cried she, "should know me too well to desire such an assurance; but, however mysterious her situation may appear to others, she will not, I trust and believe, let it appear so to me. I wait with impatience for an explanation."

"It is one of my greatest sorrows," exclaimed Amanda, "that I cannot give such an explanation: No, no," she continued, in an agony, "a death-bed confession would not authorize my telling you the occasion of Lord Mortimer's separation and mine." The Prioress now insisted on her taking a chair, and then begged, as far as she could, without farther delay, she would let her into her situation.

Amanda immediately complied.—"An unexpected obstacle to her union with Lord Mortimer," she said, "had arisen, an obstacle which, while compelled to submit to it, she was bound most solemnly to conceal; it was expedient therefore she should retire from Lord Mortimer, without giving

giving him the smallest intimation of such an intention, lest, if he suspected it, he should inquire too minutely, and by so doing plunge not only her but himself into irremediable distress; to avoid this, it was necessary all but the Prioress should be ignorant of her scheme, and by her means she hoped she should be put in a way of finding such a place of secrecy and security as she required. — She besought the Prioress, with streaming eyes, not to impute her resignation of Lord Mortimer to any unworthy motive, to that Heaven, which could alone console her for his loss, she appealed for her innocence; she besought her to believe her sincere, to pity, but not condemn her, to continue her friend now, when her friendship was most needful in this her deep distress, and she assured her, if it was withdrawn, she believed she could no longer struggle with her sorrows.

The Prioress remained silent a few minutes, and then addressed her in a solemn voice.

“ I own, Miss Fitzalan, your conduct appears so inexplicable, so astonishing, that nothing but the opinion I have formed of your character, from seeing the manner in which you have acted since left to yourself, could prevent my esteem from being diminished; but I am persuaded you cannot act from a bad motive, therefore, till that persuasion

ceases, my esteem can know no diminution. From this declaration you may be convinced, that, to the utmost of my power, I will serve you, yet, ere you finally determine and require such service, weigh well what you are about, consider in the eyes of the world you are about acting a dishonourable part, in breaking your engagement with Lord Mortimer without assigning some reason for doing so. Nothing short of a point of conscience should influence you to this."

"Nothing short of it has," replied Amanda, "therefore pity, and do not aggravate my feelings by pointing out the consequences, which will attend the sacrifice I am compelled to make; only promise, taking the Prioress's hand, only promise, in this great and sad emergency, to be my friend."

Her looks, her words, her agonies, stopped short all the Prioress was going to say. She thought it would be barbarity any longer to dwell upon the ill-consequences of an action, which she was now convinced some fatal necessity compelled her to; she therefore gave her all the consolation now in her power, by assuring her she would immediately think about some place for her to retire to, and would keep all which had passed between them a profound secret. She then insisted on Amanda's lying down, and trying to compose herself, she

brought her drops to take, and drawing the curtains about her, retired from the room. In two hours she returned; though she entered the chamber softly, Amanda immediately drew back the curtain, and appeared much more composed than when the Prioress had left her. The good woman would not let her rise, but sat down on the bed to tell her what she had contrived for her.

"She had a relation in Scotland," she said, "who, from reduced circumstances, had kept a school for many years; but as the infirmities of age came on, she was not able to pay so much attention to her pupils as their friends thought requisite, and she had only been able to retain them by promising to get a person to assist her, as she thought her cousin (the Prioress) more in the way of procuring such a one than herself, she had written to her for that purpose; a clever, well-behaved young woman, who would be satisfied with a small salary, was what she wanted."

"I should not mention such a place to you," said the Prioress, "but that the necessity there is for your immediately retiring from Lord Mortimer, leaves me no time to look out for another: But do not imagine I wish you to continue there; No, indeed, I should think it a pity such talents as you possess should be buried in such obscurity.—

What I think is, that you can stay there till you grow more composed, and can look out for a better establishment."

"Do not mention my talents," said Amanda, "my mind is so enervated by grief, that it will be long before I can make any great exertion, and the place you have mentioned is, from its obscurity, just such a one as I desire to go to."

"There is besides another inducement," said the Prioress, "namely, its being but a few miles from Port-Patrick, to which place a fair wind will bring you in a few hours from this. I know the master of a little wherry, which is perpetually going backwards and forwards; he lives in this neighbourhood, and both he and his wife consider themselves under obligations to me, and will rejoice, I am sure, at an opportunity of obliging me: I shall therefore send for him this evening, informing him of the time you wish to go, and desire his care till he leaves you himself at Mrs. Macpherson's."

Amanda thanked the Prioress, who proceeded to say, "that on the presumption of her going to her cousin's, she had already written a letter for her to take; but wished to know whether she would be mentioned by her own or a fictitious name?"

Amanda

Amanda replied, "By a fictitious one," and, after a little consideration, fixed on that of Frances Donald, which the Prioress accordingly inserted, and then read the letter.

TO MRS. MACPHERSON.

"DEAR COUSIN,

"The bearer of this letter, Frances Donald, is the young person I have procured you for an assistant in your school. — I have known her some time, and can vouch for her cleverness and discretion. She is well born, and well educated, and has seen better days; but the wheel of fortune is continually turning, and she bears her misfortunes with a patience that to me is the best proof she could give of a real good disposition. — I have told her you give but ten pounds a year; her going proves she is not dissatisfied with the salary. I am sorry to hear you are troubled with rheumatic pains, and hope, when you have more time to take care of yourself, you will grow better. All the sisters join me in thanking you for your kind inquiries after them. We do tolerably well in the little school we keep, and trust our gra-
titude

titude to Heaven for its present goodness will obtain a continuance of it. I beg to hear from you soon,

And am, my dear cousin,

Your sincere friend, and affectionate kinswoman,

St. Catherine's.

ELIZABETH DERMOT."

"I have not said as much as you deserve,"—said the Prioress; "but if the letter does not meet your approbation, I will make any alteration you please in it."—Amanda assured her "it did," and the Prioress then said, "that Lord Mortimer had been again at the Convent to inquire after her, and was told she was better."—Amanda said, she would not see him till the hour she had appointed for his coming to supper."—The Prioress agreed, "that as things were changed she was right in being in his company as little as possible, and, to prevent her being in his way, she should have her dinner and tea in her own room." The cloth was accordingly laid in it, nor would the good-natured Prioress depart till she saw Amanda eat something. Sister Mary, she said, was quite anxious

anxious to come in, and perform the part of an attendant, but was prevented by her.

The distraction of Amanda's thoughts was now abated, from having every thing adjusted relative to her future conduct, and the company of the Prioress, who returned to her as soon as she had dined, prevented her losing the little composure she had with such difficulty acquired.

She besought the Prioress not to delay writing after her departure, and to relate faithfully every thing which happened in consequence of her flight. She entreated her not to let a mistaken compassion for her feelings influence her to conceal any thing, as any thing like the appearance of concealment in her letter would only torture her with anxiety and suspense.

The Prioress solemnly promised she would obey her request, and Amanda with tears regretted that she was now unable to recompense the kindness of the Prioress and the Sisterhood, as she had lately intended doing by Lord Mortimer's desire, as well as her own inclination. The Prioress begged her not to indulge any regret on that account, as they considered themselves already liberally recompensed, and had besides quite sufficient to satisfy their humble desires.

Amanda

Amanda said, she meant to leave a letter on the dressing table for Lord Mortimer, with the notes which he had given her enclosed in it. "The picture and the ring," said she, with a falling tear, "I cannot part with;" for the things, which she had ordered from the neighbouring town, she told the Prioress she would leave money in her hands, also a present for the women, who had been engaged to attend her to England, as some small recompense for her disappointment: She meant only to bring some linen and her mourning to Scotland, the rest of her things, including her music and books, at some future and better period, might be sent after her.

Amanda was in debt to the Sisterhood for three months board and lodging, which was ten guineas. Of the two hundred pounds, which Lord Mortimer had given her on leaving Castle Carberry, one hundred and twenty pounds remained, so that tho' unable to answer the claims of gratitude, she thanked Heaven she was able to fulfil those of justice. This she told the Prioress, who instantly declared, "that, in the name of the whole Sisterhood, she would take upon her to refuse any thing from her." Amanda did not contest the point, being secretly determined how to act. The Prioress drank tea with her. When over, Amanda
said

said she would lie down, in order to try and be composed against Lord Mortimer came. The Prioress accordingly withdrew, saying, "she should not be disturbed till then."

By this means Amanda was enabled to be in readiness for delivering her letter to Lord Cherbury at the proper hour. Her heart beat with apprehension as it approached; she dreaded Lord Mortimer again surprising her amongst the ruins, or some of the Nuns following her to them. At last the clock gave the signal for keeping her appointment. She arose, trembling from the bed, and opened the door; she listened, and no noise announced any one's being near; the moments were precious; she glided through the gallery, and had the good fortune to find the hall door open. She hastened to the ruins, and found Lord Cherbury already waiting there. She presented him the letter in silence. He received it in the same manner; but when he saw her turning away to depart he snatched her hand, and, in a voice that denoted the most violent agitation, exclaimed, "Tell me, tell me, Miss Fitzalan, is this letter propitious?"

"It is," replied she, in a faltering voice.

"Then may Heaven eternally bless you," cried he, falling at her feet, and wrapping his arms about

about her. His posture shocked Amanda, and his detention terrified her.

"Let me go, my Lord," said she: "In pity to me, in mercy to yourself, let me go, for one moment longer and we may be discovered."

Lord Cherbury started up—"From whom,"—cried he, "can I hear about you?"

"From the Prioress of St. Catherine's," replied Amanda, in a trembling voice, "she only will know the secret of my retreat."

He again snatched her hand, and kissed it with vehemence.—"Farewell, thou angel of a woman!" he exclaimed, and disappeared amongst the ruins. Amanda hurried back, dreading every moment to meet Lord Mortimer; but she neither met him or any other person. She had scarcely gained her chamber ere the Prioress came to inform her his Lordship was in the parlour. She instantly repaired to it. The air had a little changed the deadly hue of her complexion, so that from her looks he supposed her better, and her words strengthened the supposition. She talked with him, forced herself to eat some supper, and checked the tears from falling, which sprang to her eyes whenever he mentioned the happiness they must experience when united, the pleasures they should enjoy at Thornbury, and the delight Lady Martha
and

and Lady Araminta would experience whenever they met.

Amanda desired him not to come to breakfast the next morning, nor to the Convent, till after dinner, as she should be so busy preparing for her journey, she would have no time to devote to him. He wanted to convince her he could not retard her preparations by coming, but she would not allow this.

Amanda passed another wretched night. She breakfasted in the morning with the Nuns, who expressed their regret at losing her—a regret however mitigated by the hope of shortly seeing her again, as Lord Mortimer had promised to bring her to Castle Carberry as soon as she had visited his friends in England. This was a trying moment for Amanda; she could scarcely conceal her emotions, or keep herself from weeping aloud, at the mention of a promise never to be fulfilled. — She swallowed her breakfast in haste, and withdrew to her chamber on pretence of settling her things. Here she was immediately followed by the Nuns, entreating they might severally be employed in assisting her. She thanked them with her usual sweetness, but assured them no assistance was necessary, as she had but few things to pack, never having unlocked the chests which had come from
Castle

Castle Carberry. They retired on receiving this assurance, and Amanda, fearful of another interruption, instantly sat down to write her farewell letter to Lord Mortimer.

TO LORD MORTIMER.

" MY LORD,

" A destiny, which neither of us can controul, forbids our union. In vain were obstacles encountered and apparently overcome; one has arisen to oppose it, which we never could have thought of, and in yielding to it, as I am compelled by dire necessity to do, I find myself separated from you, without the remotest hope of our ever meeting again—without being allowed to justify my conduct, or offer one excuse which might, in some degree, palliate the abominable ingratitude and deceit I may appear guilty of; appear I say, for in reality my heart is a stranger to either, and is now agonized at the sacrifice it is compelled to make; but I will not hurt your Lordship's feelings by dwelling on my own sufferings. Already have I caused you too much pain, but never again shall I cross your path to disturb your peace, and shade your prospect of felicity; no, my Lord, removed to a
tedious

tedious distance, the name I love no more will sink upon my ear, the delusive form of happiness no more will mock me.

“ Had every thing turned out according to my wishes, perhaps happiness, so great, so unexpected, might have produced a dangerous revolution in my sentiments, and withdrawn my thoughts too much from Heaven to earth: If so, oh! blessed be the Power that snatched from my lips the cup of joy, though at the very moment I was tasting the delightful beverage.

“ I cannot bid you pity me, though I know myself deserving of compassion: I cannot bid you forbear condemning me, though I know myself undeserving of censure. In this letter I enclose the notes I received from your Lordship; the picture and the ring I have retained, they will soon be my only vestiges of former happiness. Farewell, Lord Mortimer, dear and invaluable friend, farewell for ever. May that peace, that happiness you so truly deserve to possess, be your's, and may they never again meet with such interruptions as they have received from the unfortunate

AMANDA M. FITZALAN.”

This

This letter was blistered with her tears; she laid it in a drawer till evening, and then proceeded to pack whatever she meant to take with her in a little trunk. In the midst of this business the Prioress came in to inform her she had seen the master of the wherry, and settled every thing with him. He not only promised to be secret, but to sail the following morning at four o'clock, and conduct her himself to Mrs. Macpherson's. About three he was to come to the Convent for her; he had also promised to provide every thing necessary on board for her.

Matters being thus arranged, Amanda told the Prioress, to avoid suspicion, she would leave the money she intended for the woman, who had been engaged to accompany her to England, on her dressing table, with a few lines purporting who it was for. The Prioress approved of her doing so, as it would prevent any one from suspecting she was privy to her departure. She was obliged to leave her directly, and Amanda took the opportunity of putting up fifteen guineas in paper, five for the woman, and ten for the Nuns. She wished to do more for them, but feared to obey the dictates of generosity, while her own prospect of provision was so uncertain. She wrote as follows to the Prioress:

TO

TO MRS. DERMOT.

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ Was my situation otherwise than it now is, be assured I never should have offered the trifle you will find in this paper as any way adequate to the discharge of my debt; to you, and your amiable companions, I regret my inability (more than I can express) of proving my gratitude to you and them for all your kindnesses; never will they be obliterated from my remembrance, and He, who has promised to regard those that befriend the orphan, will reward you for them. I have also left five guineas for the woman you were so good as to engage to attend me to England. I trust she will think them a sufficient recompence for any trouble, or disappointment, I may have occasioned her.

“ Farewell, dear Mrs. Dermot, dear and amiable inhabitants of St. Catherine's, farewell. As Amanda will never forget you in her's, so let her never be forgotten in your orisons, and never cease to believe her

Grateful, sincere, and affectionate,

A. M. FITZALAN.”

By

By this time she was summoned to dinner. Her spirits were sunk in the lowest dejection at the idea of leaving the amiable women who had been so kind to her, and above all, at the idea of the last sad evening she was to pass with Lord Mortimer.

His Lordship came early to the Convent. — The dejected looks of Amanda immediately struck him, and renewed all his apprehensions about her health. She answered his tender inquiries by saying she was fatigued.

“Perhaps,” said he, “you would like to rest one day, and not commence your journey to-morrow?”

“No, no,” cried Amanda, “it shall not be deferred. To-morrow,” continued she, with a smile of anguish, “I will commence it.”

Lord Mortimer thanked her for a resolution, he imagined, dictated by an ardent desire to please him, but at the same time again expressed his fears that she was ill.

Amanda perceived that if she did not exert herself, her dejection would lead him to inquiries she would find it difficult to evade; but as to exert herself was impossible, in order to withdraw his attention, in some degree, from herself, she proposed that, as this was the last evening they would be at the Convent, they should invite the Nuns to
drink

drink tea with them. Lord Mortimer immediately acquiesced in the proposal, and the invitation being sent was accepted.

But the conversation of the whole party was of a melancholy kind. Amanda was so much beloved among them, that the prospect of losing her filled them with a regret, which, even the idea of seeing her soon again, could not banish. About nine, which was their hour for prayers, they rose to retire, and would have taken leave of Lord Mortimer, had he not informed them, that on Miss Fitzalan's account he would not commence the journey next day till ten o'clock, at which time he would again have the pleasure of seeing them.

When they withdrew he endeavoured to cheer Amanda, and besought her to exert her spirits. — Of his own accord, he said, he would leave her early, that she might get as much rest as possible against the ensuing day : He accordingly rose to depart. What an agonizing moment for Amanda, to hear, to behold the man, so tenderly beloved, for the last time, to think that ere that hour the next night she should be far, far away from him, considered as a treacherous and ungrateful creature, despised, perhaps execrated, as a source of perpetual disquiet and sorrow to him ! Her heart swelled at those ideas with feelings she thought

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would burst it, and when he folded her to his bosom, and bid her be cheerful against the next morning, she involuntarily returned the pressure, by straining him to her heart in convulsive agitation, whilst a shower of tears burst from her. — Lord Mortimer, shocked and surprised at these tears and emotions, re-seated her, for her agitation was contagious, and he trembled so much he could not support her; then throwing himself at her feet, “My Amanda! my beloved girl!” cried he, what is the matter? Is any wish of your heart yet unfulfilled? If so, let no mistaken notion of delicacy influence you to conceal it; on your happiness you know mine depends; tell me therefore, I entreat, I conjure you, tell me, is there any thing I can do to restore you to cheerfulness?”

“Oh! no,” said Amanda, “all that a mortal could do to serve me you have already done, and my gratitude, the fervent sense I have of the obligations I lie under to you, I cannot fully express. May Heaven,” raising her streaming eyes, “may Heaven recompense your goodness, by bestowing the choicest of its blessings on you!”

“That,” said Lord Mortimer, half smiling, “it has already done in giving you to me, for you are the choicest blessing it could bestow; but
tell

tell me what has dejected you in this manner? something more than fatigue I am sure."

Amanda assured him "he was mistaken," and fearful of his further inquiries, told him "she only waited for his departure to retire to rest, which she was convinced would do her good."

Lord Mortimer instantly rose from his kneeling posture: "Farewell, then, my dear Amanda," cried he, "farewell, and be well and cheerful against the morning."

She pressed his hand between her's, and laying her cold wet cheek upon it: "Farewell," said she, "when next we meet I shall (I trust) be well and cheerful; for in Heaven alone (thought she at that moment) we shall ever meet again."

On the spot in which he left her Amanda stood motionless, till she heard the hall-door close after him; all composure then forsook her, and in an agony of tears and sobs, she threw herself on the seat he had occupied. The good Prioress, guessing what her feelings at this minute must be, was at hand, and came in with drops and water, which she forced her to take, and mingled the tears of sympathy with her's.

Her soothing attentions in a little time had the effect she desired. They revived, in some degree, her unhappy young friend, who exclaimed, "that

the severest trial she could ever possibly experience was now over."

"And will, I trust and believe," replied the Prioress, "even in this life yet be rewarded."

It was agreed that Amanda should put on her habit, and be prepared against the man came for her. The Prioress promised, as soon as the house was at rest, to follow her to her chamber. — Amanda accordingly went to her apartment, and put on her travelling dress. She was soon followed by the Prioress, who brought in bread, wine, and cold chicken; but the full heart of Amanda would not allow her to partake of them, and her tears, in spite of her efforts to restrain them, again burst forth. "She was sure," she said, "the Prioress would immediately let her know if any intelligence arrived of her brother, and she again besought her to write as soon as possible after her departure, and to be minute."

She left the letters, one for Lord Mortimer, and the other for the Prioress, on the table, and then, with a kind of melancholy impatience, waited for the man, who was punctual to the appointed hour of three, and announced his arrival by a tap at the window. She instantly rose, and embraced the Prioress in silence, who, almost as much affected as herself, had only power to say, "God bless

blefs you, my dear child, and make you as happy as you deserve to be."

Amanda shook her head mournfully, as if to say "she expected no happiness," and then softly stepping along the gallery, opened the hall-door, where she found the man waiting. Her little trunk was already lying in the hall : She pointed it out to him, and as soon as he had taken it they departed.

Never did any being feel more forlorn than Amanda now did ; what she suffered when quitting the Marchioness's was comparative happiness to what she now endured. She then looked forward to the protection, comfort and support, of a tender parent ; now she had nothing in view which could in the least cheer or alleviate her feelings. She cast her mournful eyes around, and the objects she beheld heightened, if possible, her anguish. — She beheld the old trees which shaded the grave of her father waving in the morning breeze, and, oh ! how fervently at that moment did she wish that by his side she was laid beneath their shelter !

She turned from them with a heart-rending sigh, which reached the ear of the man who trudged before her. He instantly turned, and seeing her pale and trembling, told her he had an arm at her service, which she gladly accepted, being scarcely able to support herself ; a small boat was waiting

for them about half a mile above Castle Carberry; it conveyed them in a few moments to the vessel, which the master previously told her would be under weigh directly; she was pleased to find his wife on board, who conducted Amanda to the cabin, where she found breakfast laid out with neatness for her. She took some tea and a little bread, being almost exhausted with fatigue. Her companion imputing her dejection to fears of crossing the sea, assured her the passage would be very short, and bid her observe how plainly they could see the Scottish hills, now partially gilded by the beams of the rising sun; but beautiful as they appeared, Amanda's eyes were turned from them to a more interesting object, Castle Carberry. — She asked the woman if she thought the Castle could be seen from the opposite Coast? and she replied in the negative.

“ I am sorry for it,” said Amanda, mournfully. She continued at the window for the melancholy pleasure of contemplating it, till compelled by sickness to lie down on the bed. The woman attended her with the most assiduous care, and about four o'clock in the afternoon informed her they had reached Port Patrick. Amanda arose, and sending for the master, told him, “ As she did not wish to go to an inn, she would thank him

him to hire a chaise to carry her directly to Mrs. Macpherson's." He said she should be obeyed, and Amanda having settled with him for her passage, he went on shore for that purpose, and soon returned to inform her a carriage was ready. — Amanda, having thanked his wife for her kind attention, stepped into the boat, and entered the chaise the moment she landed. Her companion told her he was well acquainted with Mrs. Macpherson, having frequently carried packets from Mrs. Dermot to her. She lived about five miles from Port Patrick, he said, and near the sea-coast. They accordingly soon reached her habitation; it was a small low house, of a greyish colour, situated in a field almost covered with thistles, and divided from the road by a ragged looking wall; the sea lay at a little distance from it; the Coast hereabouts was extremely rocky, and the prospect on every side wild and dreary in the extreme.

Amanda's companion, by her desire, went first into the house, to prepare Mrs. Macpherson for her reception. He returned in a few minutes, and telling her she was happy at her arrival, conducted her into the house. From a narrow passage they turned into a small gloomy-looking parlour, with a clay floor. Mrs. Macpherson was

sitting in an old-fashioned arm chair—her face was sharp and meagre—her stature low, and, like Otway's ancient Beldame, doubled with age; her gown was grey stuff, and though she was so low, it was not long enough to reach her ankle; her black silk apron was curtailed in the same manner, and over a little mob cap she wore a handkerchief tied under her chin. She just nodded to Amanda on her entrance, and, putting on a pair of large spectacles, surveyed her without speaking. Amanda presented Mrs. Dermot's introductory letter, and then, though unbidden, seated herself on the window-seat till she had perused it. Her trunk in the mean time was brought in, and she paid for the carriage, requesting at the same time the master of the vessel to wait till she had heard what Mrs. Macpherson would say. At length the old Lady broke silence, and her voice was quite as sharp as her face.

"So child," said she, again surveying Amanda, and then elevating her spectacles to have a better opportunity of speaking, "why, to be sure I did desire my cousin to get me a young person, but not one so young, so very young, as you appear to be."

"Lord bless you!" said the man, "if that is a fault, why it is one will mend every day."

"Aye,

"Aye, aye," cried the old Dame, "but it will mend a little too slow for me: However, child, as you are so well recommended, I will try you. My cousin says something of your being well born, and having seen better days; however, child, I tell you before hand, I shall not consider what you have been, but what you are now; I shall therefore expect you to be mild, regular, and attentive; no flaunting, no gadding, no chattering, but staid, sober, and modest."

"Bless your heart," said the man, "if you look in her face you will see she'll be all you desire."

"Aye, aye, so you may say; but I should be very sorry to depend upon the promise of a face; like the heart, it is often treacherous and deceitful, so pray, young woman, tell me, and remember I expect a conscientious answer, whether you think you will be able to do as I wish."

"Yes, Madam," replied Amanda, in a voice almost choaked by the variety of painful emotions she experienced.

"Well then we are agreed, as you know the salary I give." The master of the vessel now took his leave, never having been asked by Mrs. Macpherson to take any refreshment.

The heart of Amanda sunk within her from the moment she entered Mrs. Macpherson's door;

she shuddered at being left with so unsocial a being in a place so wild and dreary; a hovel near St. Catherine's she would have thought a palace in point of real comfort to her present habitation, as she then could have enjoyed the soothing society of the tender and amiable Nuns. The presence of the master of the vessel, from the pity and concern he manifested for her, had something consolatory in it, and when he left the room she burst into tears, as if then, and not till then, she had been utterly abandoned. She hastily followed him out: "Give my love, my best love," said she, sobbing violently, and laying her trembling hand on his, "to Mrs. Dermot, and tell her, oh! tell her to write directly, and give me some comfort."

"You may depend on my doing so," replied he; "but cheer up, my dear young Lady, what, tho' the old Dame in the parlour is a little cranky, she will mend no doubt, so Heaven bless you, and make you as happy as you deserve to be."

Sad and silent Amanda returned to the parlour, and seating herself in the window, strained her eyes after the carriage, which had brought her to this dismal spot.

CHAP. IX.

Of joys departed—never to return,
How bitter the remembrance!

BLAIR.

“WELL, child,” said Mrs. Macpherson,
“do you choose to take any thing?”

“I thank you, Madam,” replied Amanda, “I should like a little tea.”

“Oh! as to tea I have just taken my own, and the things are all washed and put by; but if you like a glass of spirits and water, and a crust of bread, you may have it.”

Amanda said, “she did not.”

“Oh! very well,” cried Mrs. Macpherson, “I shall not press you, for supper will soon be ready.”

She then desired Amanda to draw a chair near her’s, and began torturing her with a variety of minute

and trifling questions, relative to herself, the Nuns, and the neighbourhood of St. Catherine's.

Amanda briefly said, "her father had been in the army, that many disappointments and losses had prevented his making any provision for her, and that on his death, which happened in the neighbourhood of the Convent, the Nuns had taken her out of compassion till she procured an establishment for herself."

"Aye, and a comfortable one you have procured yourself I promise you," said Mrs. Macpherson, "if it is not your own fault." She then told Amanda, "she would amuse her by shewing her her house and other concerns." This indeed was easily done, as it consisted but of the parlour, two closets adjoining it, and the kitchen, on the opposite side of the entry; the other concerns were a small garden, planted with kale, and the field covered with thistles: "A good comfortable tenement this," cried Mrs. Macpherson, shaking her head with much satisfaction, as she leaned upon her ebony-headed cane, and cast her eyes around. She bid Amanda admire the fine prospect before the door, and calling to a red-haired and bare-legged girl, desired her to cut some thistles to put into the fire, and hasten the boiling of the kale.— On returning to the parlour she unlocked a press, and

and took out a pair of coarse brown sheets to air for Amanda. She herself slept in one closet, and in the other was a bed for Amanda, laid on a half decayed bedstead, without curtains, and covered with a blue stuff quilt; the closet was lightened by one small window, which looked into the garden, and its furniture consisted of a broken chair, and a piece of looking-glass stuck to the wall.

The promised supper was at length served; it consisted of a few head of kale, some oaten bread, a jug of water, and a small phial half full of spirits, which Amanda would not taste, and the old Lady herself took but sparingly; they were lighted by a small candle, which, on retiring to their closets, Mrs. Macpherson cut between them.

Amanda felt relieved by being alone. She could now without restraint indulge her tears, and her reflections, that she could never enjoy any satisfaction with a being so ungracious in her manners, and so contracted in her notions, she foresaw; but, disagreeable as her situation must be, she felt inclined to continue in it, from the idea of its giving her more opportunities of hearing from Mrs. Dermot than she could have in almost any other place, and by those opportunities alone could she expect to hear of Lord Mortimer, and to hear of him, even the most trifling

trifling circumstance, though divided, for ever divided from him, would be a source of exquisite, though melancholy, pleasure.

To think she should hear of him, at once soothed and fed her melancholy, it lessened the violence of sorrow, yet, without abating its intenseness, it gave a delicious sadness to her soul she thought would be ill exchanged for any feelings short of these she must have experienced, if her wishes had been accomplished, she enjoyed the pensive luxury of virtuous grief which mitigates the sharp

With gracious drops

Of cordial pleasure,

and which Akenfide so beautifully describes; nor can I forbear quoting the lines he has written to illustrate this truth:

Ask the faithful youth

Why the cold urn of her, whom long he lov'd,

So often fills his arms, so often draws

His lonely footsteps at the silent hour,

To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?

O, he will tell thee, that the wealth of worlds

Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego

That sacred hour, when stealing from the noise

Of care and envy, sweet remembrance sooths

With virtue's kindest looks, his aching heart,

And turns his tears to rapture.

Fatigued by the contending emotions she experienced, as well as the sickness she went through at sea, Amanda soon retired to her flock bed, and fell into a profound slumber, in which she continued till roused in the morning by the shrill voice of Mrs. Macpherson, exclaiming, as she rapped at the door, "Come, come, Frances, it is time to rise."

Amanda started from her sleep, forgetting both the name she had adopted and the place where she was; but Mrs. Macpherson again calling her to rise restored her to her recollection. She replied, she would attend her directly, and hurrying on her clothes was with her in a few minutes. She found the old Lady seated at the breakfast table, who, instead of returning her salutation, said, "that on account of her fatigue she excused her lying so long in bed this morning, for it was now eight o'clock; but in future she would expect her to rise before six in summer, and seven in winter, adding, as there was no clock, she would rap at her door for that purpose every morning."

Amanda assured her "she was fond of rising early, and always accustomed to it." The tea was now poured out, it was of the worst kind, and sweetened with coarse brown sugar, the bread was eaten, and there was no butter. Amanda, unused

to such unpalatable fare, swallowed a little of it with difficulty, and then, with some hesitation, said, "she would prefer milk to tea." Mrs. Macpherson frowned exceedingly at this, and, after continuing silent a few minutes, said, "she had really made tea for two people, and she could not think of having it wasted; besides (she added) the economy of her house was so settled she could not infringe it for any one." She kept no cow herself, and only took in as much milk as served her tea, and an old tabby cat.

Amanda replied, "it was of no consequence," and Mrs. Macpherson said, "indeed she supposed so, and muttered something of people giving themselves airs they had no pretensions to." The tea table was removed before nine, when the school began; it consisted of about thirty girls, most of them daughters to farmers in the neighbourhood. Amanda and they being introduced to each other, (and she being previously informed what they were taught) was desired to commence the task of instructing them entirely herself that day, as Mrs. Macpherson wanted to observe her manner—a most unpleasant task indeed for poor Amanda, whose mind and body were both harrassed by anxiety and fatigue. As she had undertaken it, however, she resolved to go through it with as much

much cheerfulness and alacrity as possible; she accordingly acquitted herself to the satisfaction of Mrs. Macpherson, who only found fault with her too great gentleness, saying, the children would never fear her. At two the school broke up, and Amanda, almost as delighted as the children to be at liberty, was running into the garden to try if the air would be of use to a very violent head-ach; when she was called back, to put the forms and other things in order, she coloured, and stood motionless, till recollecting, that if she refused to obey Mrs. Macpherson a quarrel would probably ensue, which, circumstanced as she was, without knowing where to go to, would be dreadful, she silently performed what she had been desired to do. Dinner was then brought in; it was as simple and as sparing as a Braman could desire it to be. When over, Mrs. Macpherson composed herself to take a nap in her large chair, without making any kind of apology to Amanda.

Left at liberty, Amanda would now have walked out; but it had just began to rain, and every thing looked dreary and desolate; from the window in which she pensively sat she had a view of the sea; it looked black and tempestuous, and she could distinguish its awful and melancholy roaring as it dashed against the rocks. The little servant girl,

as

as she cleaned the kitchen, sung a dismal Scotch ditty; so that all conspired to oppress the spirits of Amanda with a dejection greater than she had before ever experienced; all hope was now extinct, the social ties of life seemed broken never more to be re-united. She had now no father, no friend, no lover, as heretofore, to sooth her feelings, or alleviate her sorrows. Like the poor Belvidera she might have said,

“ There was a time

Her cries and sorrows

Were not despis'd, when, if she chanc'd to sigh,

Or but look sad, a friend or parent

Would have ta'en her in their arms,

Eas'd her declining head upon their breasts,

And never left her till they found the cause;

But now let her weep seas,

Cry till she rend the earth, sigh till she burst

Her heart asunder, she is disregarded : ”

Like a tender sapling, transplanted from its native soil, she seemed to stand alone exposed to every adverse blast. Her tears gushed forth, and fell in showers down her pale cheeks. She sighed forth the name of her father : “ Oh ! dear and most benignant of men,”

men," she exclaimed, "my father and my friend, were you living I should not be so wretched, pity and consolation would then be mine: Oh! my father, one of the dreariest caverns in yonder rocks would be an asylum of comfort were you with me; but I am selfish in these regrets, certain as I am, that you exchanged this life of wretchedness for one of eternal peace, for one where you were again united to your Malvina."

Her thoughts adverted to what Lord Mortimer, in all probability now thought of her; but this was too dreadful to dwell upon, convinced as she was, that, from appearances, he must think most unfavourably of her. His picture, which hung in her bosom, she drew out; she gazed with agonizing tenderness upon it; she pressed it to her lips, and prayed for its original. From this indulgence of sorrow she was disturbed by the waking of Mrs. Macpherson. She hastily wiped away her tears, and hid the beloved picture. The evening passed most disagreeably. Mrs. Macpherson was tedious and inquisitive in her discourse, and it was almost as painful to listen as to answer her. — Amanda was happy when the hour for retiring to bed arrived, and relieved her from what might be called a kind of mental bondage.

Such

Such was the first day Amanda passed in her new habitation, and a week elapsed in the same manner without any variation, except that on Sunday she had a cessation from her labours, and went to the kirk with Mrs. Macpherson. At the end of the week she found herself so extremely ill from the fatigue and confinement she endured, as Mrs. Macpherson would not let her walk out, saying, "gadders were good for nothing;" that she told her, "except allowed to go out every evening she must leave her, as she could not bear so sedentary a life." Mrs. Macpherson looked disconcerted, and grumbled a good deal; but as Amanda spoke in a resolute manner she was frightened, lest she should put her threats into execution, she was so extremely useful in the school, and at last told her "she might take as much exercise as she pleased every day after dinner."

Amanda gladly availed herself of this permission, she explored all the romantic paths about the house, but the one she chiefly delighted to take was that which led to the sea; she loved to ramble about the Beach, when fatigued to sit down upon the fragment of a rock, and look towards the opposite shore; vainly then would she try to discover some of the objects she knew so well: Castle Carberry was utterly undistinguishable; but she knew the spot

spot on which it stood, and derived a melancholy pleasure from looking that way.

In these retired rambles she would freely indulge her tears, and gaze upon the picture of Lord Mortimer. She feared no observation, the rocks formed a kind of recess about her, and in going to them she seldom met a creature.

A fortnight passed in this way, and she began to feel surprise and uneasiness at not hearing from Mrs. Dermot ; if much longer silent, she resolved on writing, feeling it impossible to endure much longer the agony her ignorance of Lord Mortimer's proceedings gave her. The very morning, previous to the one she had fixed for writing, she saw a sailor coming to the house, and believing he was the bearer of a letter to her, she forgot every thing but her feelings at the moment, and starting from her seat ran from the room. — She met him a few yards from the house, and then perceived he was one of the sailors of the vessel she had come over in. “ You have a letter for me I hope ? ” said Amanda. The man nodded, and fumbling in his bosom for a moment, pulled out a large packet, which Amanda snatched with eager transport from him, and knowing she could not attempt to bring him into the house for refreshment, gave him a crown to procure it elsewhere, which

which he received with thankfulness, and departed. She then returned to the parlour, and was hastening to her closet to read the letter, when Mrs. Macpherfon stopped her. "Hey-day," cried she, "what is the matter? What is all this fuss about? Why, one would think that was a love letter you are so very eager to read it."

"It is not, then, I can assure you," said Amanda.

"Well, well, and who is it from?"—Amanda reflected, that if she said from Mrs. Dermot, a number of impertinent questions would be asked her, she therefore replied, "from a very particular friend."

"From a very particular friend! Well, I suppose there is nothing about life or death in it, so you may wait till after dinner to read it, and pray sit down now, and hear the children their spelling lessons." This was a tantalizing moment to Amanda; she stood hesitating whether she should obey, till reflecting, that if she went now to read the packet, she should most probably be interrupted ere she had got through half the contents, she resolved on putting it up till after dinner. — The moment at last came for Mrs. Macpherfon's usual nap, and Amanda instantly hastened to a recess amongst the rocks, where seating herself she broke the seal; the envelop contained two letters;

ters; the first she cast her eyes upon was directed in Lord Cherbury's hand. She trembled, tore it open, and read as follows:

TO MISS FITZALAN.

"In vain, my dear Madam, do you say you never will receive pecuniary favours from me. It is not you, but I, should lie under obligations from their acceptance, I should deem myself the most ungrateful of mankind if I did not insist on carrying this point: I am but just returned to London, and shall immediately order my lawyer to draw up a deed, entitling you to three hundred pounds a year, which, when completed, I shall transmit to the Priorefs (as I have this letter) to send to you. I am sensible, indeed, that I never can recompense the sacrifice you have made me, the feelings it has excited I shall not attempt to express, because language could never do them justice; but you may conceive what I must feel for the being who has preserved me from dishonour and destruction. I am informed Lord Mortimer has left Ireland, and therefore daily expect him in town. I have now not only every hope, but every prospect of his complying with my wishes: This, I imagine, will be rather pleasing to you to hear, that

that you may know the sacrifice you have made is not made in vain; but will be attended with all the good consequences I expected to derive from it. I should again enjoy a tolerable degree of peace were I assured you were happy; but this is an assurance I will hope soon to receive, for if you are not happy, who has a right to expect being so? you, whose virtue is so pure, whose generosity is so noble, so heroic, so far superior to any I have ever met with!

“That in this world, as well as the next, you may be rewarded; for it is, dear Madam, the sincere wish of him, who has the honour to subscribe himself,

Your most grateful, most obliged,

And most obedient humble servant,

CHERBURY.”

“Unfeeling man!” exclaimed Amanda, “how little is your heart interested in what you write, and how slight do you make of the sacrifice I have made you, how cruelly mention your hopes which are derived from the destruction of mine! No, sooner would I wander from door to door for charity,

city, than be indebted to your ostentatious gratitude for support, you, whose treachery and vile deceit have ruined my happiness." She closed the letter, and committing it to her pocket, took up the other, which she saw by the direction was from her dear Mrs. Dermot.

TO MISS DONALD.

" Ah! my dear child, why extort a promise from me of being minute in relating every thing which happened in consequence of your departure, a promise so solemnly given that I dare not recede from it; yet most unwillingly do I keep it, sensible as I am that the intelligence I have to communicate will but aggravate your sorrows. Methinks I hear you exclaim at this; surely, my dear Mrs. Dermot, you who know my disposition and temper so well, might suppose I would receive such intelligence with a fortitude and patience that would prevent its materially injuring me; well, my dear, hoping this will be the case, I begin, without farther delay, to communicate particulars."

" You left me, you may remember, about three o'clock: I then went to bed, but so fatigued and oppressed I could scarcely sleep, and was quite unrefreshed by what I did get. After prayers I

repaired to the parlour, where the assiduous care of Sister Mary had already prepared every thing for your breakfast and Lord Mortimer's. I told the Sisters not to appear till they were sent for. I had not been long alone when Lord Mortimer came in, cheerful, blooming, animated. Never did I see happiness so strongly expressed in any countenance as in his; he looked indeed the lover about receiving the precious reward of constancy. He asked me had I seen you? I answered No. He soon grew impatient, said you were a lazy girl, and feared you would make a bad traveller. He then rang the bell, and desired the maid to go and call you. Oh! my dear girl, my heart almost died within me at this moment; I averted my head, and pretended to be looking at the garden to conceal my confusion. The maid returned in a few minutes, and said you were not above. Well, said Lord Mortimer, she is in some other apartment, pray search, and hasten her hither. In a few minutes after she departed, Sister Mary, all pale and breathless, rushed into the room: — "Oh, Heavens!" cried she, "Miss Fitzalan cannot be found; but here are two letters I found on her dressing table, one for you, Madam, and one for Lord Mortimer." I know not how he looked at this instant, for a guilty consciousness came over

over my mind, which prevented my raising my eyes to his. I took the letter in silence, opened, but had no power to read it. Sister Mary stood by me, wringing her hands and weeping, as she exclaimed, "What—what does she say to you?" I could neither answer her or move till a deep sigh or rather groan from Lord Mortimer roused me. I started from my seat, and perceived him pale and motionless, the letter open in his hand, upon which his eyes were rivetted. I threw open the garden door to give him air; this a little revived him. "Be comforted, my Lord," said I. He shook his head mournfully, and waving his hand for me neither to speak or follow him, passed into the garden.—"Blessed Heaven!" said Sister Mary again, "what does she say to you? I gave her your letter, and desired her to read it aloud, for the tears, which flowed at the affecting situation of Lord Mortimer, quite obscured my sight; and here, my dear child, I must declare, that you have been too generous, and also, that the sum you betrayed us into taking is but considered as a loan by us; but, to return to my first subject, the alarm concerning you now became general, and the Nuns crowded into the room; grief and consternation in every countenance. In about half an hour I saw Lord Mortimer returning to

the parlour, and I then dismissed them. He had been endeavouring to compose himself, but his efforts for doing so were ineffectual. He trembled, was pale as death, and spoke with a faltering voice. He gave me your letter to read, and I put mine into his hand. "Well, my Lord," said I, on perusing it, we must rather pity than condemn her."

"From my soul," cried he, "I pity her, I pity such a being as Amanda Fitzalan, for being the slave, the prey of vice; but she has been cruel to me, she has deceived, inhumanly deceived me, and blasted my peace for ever!"

"Ah, my Lord!" I replied, "though appearances are against her, I can never believe her guilty; she, who performed all the duties of a child as Amanda Fitzalan did, and who, to my certain knowledge, was preparing herself for a life of poverty, can never be a victim to vice."

"Mention her no more," cried he, "her name is like a dagger to my heart; the suspicions, which but a few nights ago I could have killed myself for entertaining, are now confirmed; they intruded on my mind from seeing Belgrave haunting this place, and from finding her secreted amidst the ruins at a late hour. Ah, Heavens! when I noticed her confusion, how easily did she exculpate herself

herself to a heart prepossessed like mine in her favour. Unhappy—unfortunate girl—sad and pitiable is thy fate! but may an early repentance snatch thee from the villain who now triumphs in thy ruin, and may we, since thus separated, never meet again. So well,” continued he, “am I convinced of the cause of her flight, that I shall not make one inquiry after her. I again attempted to speak in your justification, but he silenced me. I begged he would allow me to get him breakfast. He could touch nothing, and said he must return directly to Castle Carberry, but promised, in the course of the day, to see me again. I followed him into the hall; at the sight of your corded boxes he started, and shrunk back with that kind of melancholy horror, which we involuntarily feel when viewing any thing that belonged to a dear lost friend. I saw his emotions were agonizing; he hid his face with his handkerchief, and with a hasty step ascended to his carriage, which, with a travelling chaise, was waiting at the door.

“I own I was often tempted, in the course of conversation, to tell him all I knew about you; but the promise I had given you still rose to my view, and I felt, without your permission, I could not break it; yet, my dear, it is shocking to me to have such imputations cast on you. We cannot

blame Lord Mortimer for them ; situated as you were with him, your conduct has naturally excited the most injurious suspicions ; surely, my child, though not allowed to solve the mystery which has separated you from him, you may be allowed to vindicate your conduct, the sacrifice of fame and happiness is too much ; consider and weigh well what I say, and, if possible, authorise me to inform Lord Mortimer that I know of your retreat, and that you have retired neither to a lover or a friend ; but to indigence and obscurity, led thither by a fatal necessity which you are bound to conceal, and feel more severely from that circumstance, he would, I am confident, credit my words, and then, instead of condemning, would join me in pitying you. The more I reflect on your unaccountable separation, the more am I bewildered in conjectures relative to it, and convinced more strongly than ever of the frailty of human joy, which, like a summer cloud, is bright, but transitory in its splendor. Lord Mortimer had left the Convent about two hours, when his men arrived to dismiss the travelling chaise and attendants : I went out and inquired after his Lord. " He is very bad, Madam," said he, " and this has been a sad morning for us all." Never, my dear Miss Fitzalan, did I, or the Sisterhood, pass so melancholy a day. About
five

five in the afternoon I received another visit from Lord Mortimer; I was alone in the parlour, which he entered with an appearance of the deepest melancholy; one of his arms was in a sling: I was terrified, lest he and Belgrave had met. He conjectured, I fancy, the occasion of the terror my countenance expressed, for he immediately said he had been ill on returning to Castle Carberry, and was bled. He was setting off directly for Dublin, he said, from whence he intended to embark for England: But I could not depart, my dear good friend (continued he) without bidding you farewell; besides I wanted to assure you, that any promise which the unfortunate girl made you in my name I shall hold sacred. I knew he alluded to the fifty pounds which he had desired you to tell me should be annually remitted to our house; I instantly therefore replied, that we had already been rewarded beyond our expectation or desires for any little attention we shewed Miss Fitzalan; but his generous resolution was not to be shaken. He looked weak and exhausted. I begged permission to make tea for him ere he commenced his journey. He consented. I went out of the room to order in the things. When I returned he was standing at the window which looked into the garden, so absorbed in meditation, he did not hear

me. I heard him say, "Cruel Amanda! is it thus you have rewarded my sufferings?" I retreated, lest he should be confused by supposing himself overheard, and did not return till the maid brought in the tea things.

"When he arose to depart he looked wavering and agitated, as if there was something on his mind he wanted courage to say. At last, in a faltering voice, while the deadly paleness of his complexion gave way to a deep crimson, he said, "I left Miss Fitzalan's letter with you."

"Ah, my dear! never did man love woman better than he did, than he now loves you. I took the letter from my pocket, and presented it to him. He put it in his bosom, with an emotion that shook his whole frame. I hailed this as a favourable opportunity for again speaking in your favour: I bid him retrospect your past actions, and judge from them whether you could be guilty of a crime —. He stopped me short; he begged me to drop a subject he was unable to bear. Had he been less credulous, he said, he should now have been much happier; then wringing my hand he bid me farewell, in a voice and with a look that drew tears from me: "Ah, my dear Madam!" cried he, "when this day commenced, how

how differently did I think it would have terminated !”

I attended him to his carriage ; he was obliged to lean upon his man as he ascended to it, and his looks and agitation proclaimed the deepest distress. I have sent repeatedly to Castle Carberry, since his departure to inquire about him, and have been informed, that they expect to hear nothing of him till Lord Cherbury’s agent comes into the country, which will not be these three months.

I have heard much of the good he did in the neighbourhood ; he has a bounteous and benevolent spirit indeed ; to our community he has been a liberal benefactor, and our prayers are daily offered up for his restoration to health and tranquillity. Amongst his other actions, when in Dublin, about three months ago, he ordered a monument to the memory of Captain Fitzalan, which has been brought down since your departure, and put up in the parish church where he is interred. I sent Sister Mary and another of the Nuns the other evening to see it, and they brought me a description of it ; it is a white marble urn, ornamented with a foliage of laurel, and standing upon a pedestal of grey, on which the name of the deceased, and words to the following effect are inscribed, namely, “ That he,

whose memory it perpetuates, performed the duties of a Christian and a soldier, with a fidelity and zeal that now warrants his enjoying a blessed recompense for both."

I know this proof of respect to your father will deeply affect you ; but I would not omit telling it, because, though it will affect, I am confident it will also please you. The late events have cast a gloom over all our spirits. Sister Mary now prays more than ever, and you know I have often told her she was only fit for a religious vocation ; it is a bad world she says we live in, and she is glad she has so little to say to it.

I am longing to hear from you. Pray tell me how you like Mrs. Macpherson ; I have not seen her since her youth, and years often produce as great a change in the temper as the face ; at any rate your present situation is too obscure for you to continue in, and as soon as your thoughts are collected and composed you must look out for another. I hope you will be constant in writing ; but I tell you before-hand, you must not expect me to be punctual in my answers ; I have been so long disused to writing, and my eyes are grown so weak ; this letter has been the work of many days, besides, I have really nothing interesting to communicate,

municate, whenever I have, you may be assured I shall not lose a moment in informing you.

The woman was extremely thankful for the five guineas you left her. Lord Mortimer sent her five more by his man, so that she thinks herself well rewarded for any trouble or disappointment she experienced. If you wish to have any of your things sent to you acquaint me, you know I shall never want an opportunity by the master of the vessel. He speaks largely of your generosity to him, and expresses much pity at seeing so young a person in such melancholy. May Heaven, if it does not remove the source, at least lessen this melancholy.

If possible allow me to write to Lord Mortimer, and vindicate you from the unworthy suspicions he entertains of you; I know he would believe me, and I should do it without discovering your retreat. Farewell, my dear girl; I recommend you constantly to the care of Heaven, and beg you to believe you will ever be dear and interesting to the heart of,

St. Catherine's.

ELIZABETH DERMOT."

Poor Amanda wept over this letter. "I have ruined the health, the peace of Lord Mortimer,"

she exclaimed, "and he now execrates me as the source of his unhappiness. Oh! Lord Cherbury, how severely do I suffer for your crime!" She began to think her virtue had been too heroic in the sacrifice she had made; but this was a transient idea, for when she reflected on the disposition of Lord Cherbury, she was convinced the divulgement of his secret would have been followed by his death, and, great as was her present wretchedness she felt it light compared to the horrors she knew she would experience, could she accuse herself of being accessory to such an event; she now drank deeply of the cup of misery, but conscious rectitude, in some degree, lessened its noxious bitterness. She resolved to caution Mrs. Dermot against mentioning her in any manner to Lord Mortimer. She was well convinced he would believe no asseveration of her innocence, and even if he did what end could it answer? their union was opposed by an obstacle not to be surmounted, and if he sought and discovered her retreat, it would only lead to new sorrows, perhaps occasion some dreadful catastrophe. "We are separated," cried she, folding her hands together, "for ever separated in this world, but in Heaven we shall again be re-united."

Aborbed

Absorbed in the reflections and sorrow this letter gave rise to, she remained in her seat till Mrs. Macpherson's little girl suddenly appeared before her, and said her mistress had made tea, and was wondering what kept her out so long.

Amanda instantly arose, and carefully putting up the letter, returned to the house, where she found Mrs. Macpherson in a very bad humour. — She grumbled exceedingly at Amanda's staying out so long, and taking notice of her eyes being red and swelled, said, "Indeed, she believed she was right in supposing she had got a love letter." Amanda made no reply, and the evening passed away in peevishness on one side, and silence on the other.

The charm, which had hitherto rendered Amanda's situation tolerable, was now dissolved, as Mrs. Dermot had said she could write but seldom, and scarcely expected to have any thing interesting to relate; she would gladly, therefore, have left Mrs. Macpherson immediately, but she knew not where to go to: She resolved, however, ere winter was entirely set in, to request Mrs. Dermot to look out for some other place for her, as she had connexions in Scotland, she thought she might recommend her to them as a governess, or a fit person to do fine works for a Lady.

She

She arose long before her usual hour the next morning, and wrote a letter expressive of her wishes and intentions to Mrs. Dermot, which she sent by a poor man who lived near the house to the post town, rewarding him liberally for his trouble.

CHAP. X.

Who knows the joys of friendship,

The trust, security, and mutual tenderness,

The double joys, where each is glad for both,

Friendship, our only wealth, our last retreat and strength,

Secure again still fortune and the world?

ROWE.

AMONG Mrs. Macpherson's pupils were two little girls, who pleased and interested Amanda greatly. Their father, for whom they were in mourning, had perished in a violent storm, and their mother had pined in health and spirits ever

ever since the fatal accident. The kindness, with which Amanda treated them, they repaid with gratitude and attention ; it had a double effect upon their little hearts, from being contrasted with the sour austerity of Mrs. Macpherson ; they told Amanda, in a whisper, one morning, that their mamma was coming to see their dear, good Frances Donald.

Accordingly, in the course of the day, Mrs. Duncan came ; she was young and pleasing in her appearance ; her weeds and deep dejection rendered her a most interesting object. She sat by Amanda, and took an opportunity, while Mrs. Macpherson was engaged with some of the children, to tell her, in a low voice, " she was truly obliged to her for the great attention and kindness she shewed her little girls, so unlike their former treatment at the school."—" The task of instructing them was her's," she said, " till her declining health and spirits rendered her no longer able to bear it."—Amanda assured her, " it was a pleasure to instruct minds so docile and sweet tempered as theirs."—Mrs. Duncan, as she rose to depart, asked her and Mrs. Macpherson to tea that evening, which invitation was instantly accepted by Mrs. Macpherson, who was extremely fond of being sociable every where but in her own house. Mrs. Duncan lived
at

at but a little distance, and every thing in and about her house was neat and comfortable. She had an old neighbour in the parlour, who kept Mrs. Macpherson in chat, and gave her an opportunity of conversing freely with Amanda. She remarked the delicacy of her looks, and said, "She believed she was ill qualified to endure so fatiguing a life as her present." She mentioned her own lonely and melancholy life, and the happiness she would derive from having such a companion, and expressed her hopes of often enjoying her society. Amanda said this would be impossible without disobliging Mrs. Macpherson, and Mrs. Duncan, on reflection, allowed it would be so. She then inquired if she ever walked? Amanda replied she did, and was asked where she generally rambled? By the seaside, she answered.

Mrs. Duncan sighed deeply, and her eyes filled with tears: "It is there I generally ramble too," said she. This led to the mention of her late loss. "Mr. Duncan had been the kindest, best of husbands," she said; "the first years of their marriage were attended with difficulties, which were just removed when he was lost on a party of pleasure with several others. It was some consolation, however," continued Mrs. Duncan, "that the body was cast upon the shore, and I had the power
of

of paying the last rights of decency and respect to him."

In short, between her and Amanda there appeared a mutual sympathy, which rendered them truly interesting to each other. From this period they generally met every evening, and passed many hours on the "sea-beat shore," talking, and often weeping over joys departed never to return! Mrs. Duncan was too delicate to inquire into Amanda's former situation; but was well convinced it had been very different from her present one. Amanda, however, of her own accord, told her what she had told Mrs. Macpherson respecting herself. Mrs. Duncan lamented her misfortunes, but since she had met them, blessed the happy chance which conducted her near her habitation.

A month passed in this manner, when one evening, at the usual place of meeting, Mrs. Duncan told her, "that she believed she should soon be quitting that part of the country." Amanda started, and turned pale at this disagreeable intelligence. She had received no answer to her letter from Mrs. Dermot, consequently dreaded that necessity would compel her to remain in her present situation, and on Mrs. Duncan's society she had depended for rendering it bearable to her.

“I

"I have been invited, my dear girl," said Mrs. Duncan, leaning on her arm as they walked up and down the Beach, "to reside with an aunt, who has always been kind, and was particularly so to me in my distress. She lives about ten miles from this, at an old place called Dunreath Abbey, of which she is housekeeper; have you ever heard of it?" — Amanda's agitation, at hearing her mother's native habitation mentioned, is not to be described; her heart palpitated; she felt her colour change, and said, Yes and No, to Mrs. Duncan, without knowing what she answered; then recollecting herself, she replied, "she had heard of it."

"Well then, my dear," continued Mrs. Duncan, "my aunt, as I have already told you, is housekeeper there; she lives in great grandeur, for it is a magnificent old seat, and has the absolute command of every thing, as none of the family have resided at it since the Earl of Dunreath's decease."

"My aunt is lately grown weary of the profound solitude in which she lives, and has asked me, in a letter which I received this morning, to go immediately and take up my residence with her, promising, if I do, she will leave every thing she is worth to me and my children, and as her salary is very good, I know she must have saved a good deal,

deal; this is a very tempting offer, and I am only with-held from accepting it directly by the fear of depriving my children of the advantages of education."

"Why," said Amanda, "what they learn at Mrs. Macpherson's they could easily learn any where else."

"But I intended, when they were a little older," replied Mrs. Duncan, "to go to some one of the neighbouring towns with them; if I once go to my aunt I must entirely relinquish such an idea, and to a boarding-school I could not send them, for I have not fortitude to bear a separation from them; what I wish therefore is, to procure a person who would be at once a pleasing companion for me, and an eligible governess for them; with such a person the solitude of Dunreath-Abbey would be rather agreeable than irksome to me."

She looked earnestly at Amanda as she spoke, and Amanda's heart began to throb with hope and agitation. "In short, my dear girl," continued she, "you of all others, to be explicit, are the person I would chuse to bring along with me; your sweet society would alleviate my sorrows, and your elegant accomplishments give to my children all the advantages I desire them to possess."

"I

"I am not only flattered, but happy by your prepossession in my favour," replied Amanda.

"I am pleased we agree in point of inclination," said Mrs. Duncan; "but I must now inform you, that my aunt has always been averse to admit any strangers to the Abbey: Why I know not, except it is by the commands of the family, and she tells me in her letter, that if I accept her invitation I must not on any account let it be known where I am removing to; I dare not therefore bring you with me without her permission; but I shall write immediately, and request it. In the course of a day or two I may expect an answer; in the mean time give Mrs. Macpherson no intimation of our present intentions, lest they should be defeated." Amanda promised she would not, and they separated.

She was now in a state of the greatest agitation, at the probability there was that she might visit the seat of her ancestors. She dreaded a disappointment, and felt that, if she went there as the companion of Mrs. Duncan, she should be better situated than a few hours before she had ever expected to be again. Two evenings after her conversation with Mrs. Duncan, on going to the Beach to meet her, she saw her approaching with an open letter in her hand, and a smile on her face,

face, which informed her its contents were pleasing. They were so indeed, as they gave permission to have Amanda brought to the Abbey, provided she promised inviolable secrecy as to where she was going. This Amanda cheerfully did, and Mrs. Duncan said, she had some affairs to settle, which would prevent their departure for a few days; at whatever time she appointed, her aunt was to send a carriage for them, and it was now agreed, that Mrs. Macpherson should be informed Mrs. Duncan was leaving that part of the country, and had engaged Amanda as a governess to her children.

Mrs. Duncan then mentioned her own terms. Amanda assured her an idea of them had never entered her thoughts. Mrs. Duncan said she was sure of that, but at the same time thought between the most intimate friends exactness should be preserved. Every thing being settled to their mutual satisfaction they separated, and the following day, after school broke up, Amanda informed Mrs. Macpherson of her intended departure. The old Dame was thunder-struck, and for some time unable to speak; but when she recovered the use of her tongue, she expressed the utmost rage and indignation against Amanda, Mrs. Duncan, and the Priorefs, against the first for thinking of leaving her, the second for inveigling her away, and the third

third for recommending a person who could serve her in such a manner. When she stopped, exhausted by her violence, Amanda took the opportunity of assuring her, that she had no reason to condemn any of them ; as for her part, previous to Mrs. Duncan's offer, she intended to leave her, being unable to bear a life of such fatigue ; that, as her removal would not be immediate, Mrs. Macpherson could suffer no inconvenience by it, there being time enough to look out for another person ere it took place : But the truth now broke from Mrs. Macpherson, angry as she was with Amanda, she could not help confessing, that she never again expected to meet with a person so well qualified to please her, and a torrent of bitter reproaches again burst forth for her quitting her.

Amanda resented them not, but did all in her power to mollify her ; as the most effectual method of doing so, she declared she meant to take no recompence for the time she had been with her, and added, if she had her permission, she would write that evening to Mrs. Dermot about a woman she had seen at the Convent, who she thought well qualified to be an assistant in her school. This was the woman who had been engaged to attend her to England. Mrs. Macpherson at last consented she should write for her, as her
wrath

wrath had gradually subsided from the moment Amanda declared she would take no payment. — Amanda accordingly wrote to Mrs. Dermot, and informed her of the agreeable change there was about taking place in her situation; also of Mrs. Macpherson's displeasure, and her own wish that a person might immediately be procured to fill the place she was resigning. She mentioned the woman already spoken of as a proper person, but requested, if she consented to come, she might not be allowed to do so till she had left Mrs. Macpherson's, else who she really was would be betrayed: She now thought little of the tedious and disagreeable days she spent, as the eagerness with which she saw Mrs. Duncan preparing for their departure promised so speedily to change them; she received an answer from Ireland even sooner than she expected. Mrs. Dermot congratulated her on having met with so amiable a friend as Mrs. Duncan; said the woman accepted the offer made in Mrs. Macpherson's name; but should not depart till she had written for that purpose, and concluded her letter by saying, there was no intelligence yet of Lord Mortimer. Mrs. Macpherson was pleased to find she should not be long without a companion, and two days after the receipt of the letter Mrs. Duncan told Amanda
their

their journey was fixed for the ensuing day; and begged Amanda to sleep at her house that night, to which she gladly consented; accordingly after dinner she took leave of Mrs. Macpherson, who grumbled out a farewell, and a hope that she might not have reason to repent quitting her, for the old Lady was so incensed to have the place Mrs. Duncan was going to, concealed from her that all her ill-humour had returned. Amanda, with a pleasure she could scarcely conceal, quitted her inhospitable mansion, and, attended by a man who carried her trunk, soon found herself at Mrs. Duncan's, where she was received with every demonstration of joy. The evening passed sociably away; they rose early in the morning, and had just breakfasted when the expected carriage from Dunreath-Abbey arrived; it was a heavy old-fashioned chaise, on whose faded pannels the arms of the Dunreath family were still visible. — Mrs. Duncan's luggage had been sent off the preceding day, so that there was nothing now to delay them. Mrs. Duncan made Amanda and the children go into the chaise before her, but detained by an emotion of the most painful nature, she lingered some time after them upon the threshold; she could not indeed depart from the habitation, where she had experienced so many happy days
with

with the man of her tenderest affections, without a flood of tears, which spoke the bitterness of her feelings. Amanda knew too well the nature of those feelings to attempt restraining them ; but the little children, impatient to begin their journey, called out to their mamma to come into the carriage. She started when they spoke, but instantly complied with their desire ; and when they expressed their grief at seeing her cheeks wet with tears, kissed them both, and said she would soon recover her spirits. She accordingly exerted herself for that purpose, and was soon in a condition to converse with Amanda. The day was fine and serene ; they travelled leisurely, for the horses had long out-lived their mettlesome days, and gave them an opportunity of attentively viewing the prospects on each side, which were various, romantic and beautiful ; the novelty of the scenes, the disagreeable place she had left, and the idea of the one she was going to, helped a little to enliven the pensive soul of Amanda, and she enjoyed a greater degree of tranquillity than she had before experienced since her separation from Lord Mortimer.

C H A P. XI.

My list'ning pow'rs

Were awed, and every thought in silence hung,

And wond'ring expectation.

AKENSIDE.

“**M**Y dear Fanny,” said Mrs. Duncan, addressing our heroine by her borrowed name, “if at all inclined to superstition, you are now going to a place which will call it forth. Dunreath-Abbey is gothic and gloomy in the extreme, and recalls to one’s mind all the stories they ever heard of haunted houses and apparitions; the desertion of the native inhabitants has hastened the depredations of time, whose ravages are unrepaired, except in the part immediately occupied by the domestics; yet what is the change in the building compared to the revolution which took place in the fortunes of her who once beheld a prospect

prospect of being its mistress ; the Earl of Dunreath's eldest daughter, as I have often heard from many, was a celebrated beauty, and as good as she was handsome ; but a malignant step-mother thwarted her happiness, and forced her to take shelter in the arms of a man who had every thing but fortune to recommend him ; but in wanting that, he wanted every thing to please her family.

“ After some years of distress she found means to soften the heart of her father ; but here the invidious step-mother again interfered, and prevented her experiencing any good effects from his returning tenderness, and it was rumoured, by a deep and iniquitous scheme, deprived her of her birth-right. Like other rumours, however, it gradually died away, perhaps from Lady Malvina and her husband never hearing of it, and none but them had a right to inquire into its truth ; but if such a scheme was really contrived, woe be to its fabricator ; the pride and pomp of wealth can neither alleviate or recompence the stings of conscience, much rather,” continued Mrs. Duncan, laying her hands upon her childrens heads as they sat at her feet, “ much rather would I have my babes wander from door to door, to beg the dole of charity than live upon the birth-right of the orphan.

“ If Lady Dunreath in reality committed the crime she was accused of, she met, in some degree, a punishment for it. Soon after the Earl's death she betrayed a partiality for a man every way inferior to her, which partiality, people have not scrupled to say, commenced, and was indulged to a criminal degree during the life-time of her husband. She would have married him had not her daughter, the Marchioness of Rosline, interfered. Proud and ambitious, her rage, at the prospect of such an alliance, knew no bounds, and seconded by the Marquis, whose disposition was congenial to her own, they got the unfortunate mother into their power, and hurried her off to a Convent in France. I know not whether she is yet living; indeed I believe there are few either know or care; she was so much disliked for her haughty disposition. I have sometimes asked my aunt about her, but she would never gratify my curiosity. She has been brought up in the family, and no doubt thinks herself bound to conceal whatever they choose.

“ She lives in ease and plenty, and is absolute mistress of the few domestics that reside at the Abbey; but of those domestics I caution you in time, or they will be apt to fill your head with frightful stories of the Abbey, which sometimes,
if

if one's spirits are weak, in spite of reason, will make an impression on the mind. They pretend that the Earl of Dunreath's first wife haunts the Abbey, venting the most piteous moans, which they ascribe to grief for the unfortunate fate of her daughter, and that daughter's children being deprived of their rightful patrimony.

"I honestly confess, when at the Abbey a few years ago, during some distresses of my husband's, I heard strange noises one evening at twilight as I walked in a gallery. I told my aunt of them, and she was quite angry at the involuntary terror I expressed, and said it was nothing but the wind whistling through some adjoining galleries which I heard. But this, my dear Fanny," said Mrs. Duncan, who on account of her children had continued the latter part of her discourse, in a low voice, "is all between ourselves; for my aunt declared she would never pardon my mentioning my ridiculous fears, or the yet more ridiculous fears of the servants to any human being."

Amanda listened in silence to Mrs. Duncan's discourse, fearful that if she spoke she should betray the emotions it excited.

They at last entered between the mountains that enclosed the valley on which the Abbey stood. The scene was solemn and solitary; every

prospect, except one of the sea, seen through an aperture in one of the mountains, was excluded. Some of these mountains were bare, craggy, and projecting; others were skirted with trees, robed with vivid green, and crowned with white and yellow furze; some were all a wood of intermingled shades, and others covered with long and purple heath, various streams flowed from them into the valley, some stole gently down their sides in silver rills, giving beauty and vigour wherever they meandered, others tumbled from fragment to fragment with a noise not undelightful to the ear, and formed for themselves a deep bed in the valley, over which trees, that appeared coeval with the building, bent their old and leafy heads.

At the foot, of what to the rest was called a gently swelling hill, lay the remains of the extensive gardens, which had once given the luxuries of the vegetable world to the banquets of the Abbey; but the buildings which had nursed those luxuries were all gone to decay, and the gay plantations were over-run with the progeny of neglect and sloth.

The Abbey was one of the most venerable looking buildings Amanda had ever beheld; but it was in melancholy grandeur she now saw it. In the wane of its days, when its glory was passed away,

away, and the whole pile proclaimed desertion and decay, she saw it, when, to use the beautiful language of Hutchinson, its pride was brought low, when its magnificence was sinking in the dust, when tribulation had taken the seat of hospitality, and solitude reigned, where once the jocund guest had laughed over the sparkling bowl, whilst the owls sung nightly their strains of melancholy to the moon-shine that slept upon its mouldering battlements.

The heart of Amanda was full of the fond idea of her parents, and the sigh of tender remembrance stole from it. "How little room," thought she, should there be in the human heart for the worldly pride, which so often dilates it, liable as all things are to change, the distress in which the descendants of noble families are so often seen, the decline of such families themselves should check that arrogant presumption with which so many look forward to having their greatness and prosperity perpetuated through every branch of their posterity.

The proud possessors of this Abbey, surrounded with affluence, and living in its full enjoyment, never perhaps admitted the idea as at all probable, that one of their descendants should ever approach the seat of her ancestors without that pomp and elegance which heretofore distinguished its daugh-

ters. Alas ! one now approaches it neither to display or contemplate the pageantry of wealth ; but meek and lowly, not to receive the smile of love, or the embrace of relatives, but afflicted and unknown, glad to find a shelter, and procure the bread of dependance beneath its decaying roof.

Mrs. Duncan happily marked not Amanda's emotion as she gazed upon the Abbey ; she was busily employed in answering her childrens questions, who wanted to know whether she thought they would be able to climb up the great big hills they saw.

The carriage at last stopped before the Abbey. Mrs. Bruce was already at the door to receive them ; she was a little smart old woman, and welcomed her niece and the children with an appearance of the greatest pleasure. On Amanda's being presented to her she gazed stedfastly in her face a few minutes, and then exclaimed, " Well, this is very strange, though I know I could never have seen this young Lady before, her face is quite familiar to me."

The hall into which they entered was large and gloomy, paved with black marble, and supported by pillars, through which the arched doors that led to various apartments were seen, rude implements, such as the Caledonians had formerly used in war

war and hunting, were ranged along the walls. Mrs. Bruce conducted them into a spacious parlour, terminated by an elegant saloon; this she told them had once been the banquetting-room; the furniture, though faded, was still magnificent, and the windows, though still in the gothic stile, from being enlarged considerably beyond their original dimensions, afforded a most delightful view of the domain.

“Do you know,” said Mrs. Duncan, “this apartment, though one of the pleasantest in the Abbey in point of situation, always makes me melancholy; the moment I enter it I think of the entertainments once given in it, and then its present vacancy and stillness almost instantly reminds me, that those who partook of these entertainments are now almost all humbled with the dust?”—Her aunt laughed, and said, “she was very romantic.”

The solemnity of the Abbey was well calculated to heighten the awe which stole upon the spirit of Amanda from her first view of it; no noise was heard throughout it, except the hoarse creaking of the massy doors, as the servants passed from one room to another adjusting Mrs. Duncan's things, and preparing for dinner. Mrs. Duncan was drawn into a corner of the room by her aunt, to converse, in a low voice, about family affairs, and the

children were rambling about the hall, wondering and inquiring about every thing they saw.

Thus left to herself, a soft languor gradually stole over the mind of Amanda, which was almost exhausted from the emotions it had experienced.— The murmuring sound of waterfalls, and the buzzing of the flies, that basked in the sunny rays which darted through the casements, lulled her into a kind of pensive tranquillity.

“ Am I really,” she asked herself, “ in the seat of my ancestors ? Am I really in the habitation where my mother was born, where her irrevocable vows were plighted to my father ? I am, and, oh ! within it. May I at last find an asylum from the vices and dangers of the world ; within it may my sorrowing spirit lose its agitation, and subdue, if not its affections, at least its murmurs, at the disappointment of those affections.”

The appearance of dinner interrupted her. She made exertions to overcome any appearance of dejection, and the conversation, if not lively, was at least cheerful. After dinner Mrs. Duncan, who had been informed by Amanda of her predilection for old-buildings, asked her aunt's permission to shew her the Abbey. Mrs. Bruce immediately arose, and said she would have that pleasure herself. She accordingly led the way ; many of the apartments

ments yet displayed the sumptuous taste of those who had furnished them. "It is astonishing to me," said Mrs. Duncan, "that so magnificent a pile as this should be abandoned, as I may say, by its possessors."

"The Marquis of Rosline's Castle is a more modern structure than this," said Mrs. Bruce, "and preferred by them on that account."

"So like the family monument," rejoined Mrs. Duncan, "they are merely satisfied with permitting this to stand, as it may help to transmit the Marchioness's name to posterity."

"How far does the Marquis live from this?" asked Amanda.

"About twelve miles," replied Mrs. Bruce, who did not appear pleased with her niece's conversation, and led the way to a long gallery, ornamented with portraits of the family. This gallery Amanda knew well by description; this was the gallery in which her father had stopped to contemplate the picture of her mother, and her heart throbbed with impatience and anxiety to see that picture.

Mrs. Bruce, as she went before her, told her the names of the different portraits. She suddenly stopped before one;—"that," cried she, "is the Marchioness of Rosline's, drawn for her when

Lady Augusta Dunreath." Amanda cast her eyes upon it, and perceived in the countenance the same haughtiness as still distinguished the Marchioness. She looked at the next pannel, and found it empty.

"The picture of Lady Malvina Dunreath hung there," said Mrs. Bruce; "but after her unfortunate marriage it was taken down."

"And destroyed," exclaimed Amanda, mournfully.

"No; but it was thrown into the old Chapel, where, with the rest of the lumber (the soul of Amanda was struck at these words) — "it has been locked up for years."

"And is it impossible to see it?" asked Amanda.

"Impossible indeed," replied Mrs. Bruce; "the Chapel, and the whole eastern part of the Abbey, have long been in a ruinous situation, on which account it has been locked up."

"This is the gallery," whispered Mrs. Duncan, "in which I heard the strange noises; but not a word of them to my aunt."

Amanda could scarcely conceal the disappointment she felt at finding she could not see her mother's picture. She would have entreated the Chapel might be opened for that purpose, had she not feared exciting suspicions by doing so.

They

They returned from the gallery to the parlour, and in the course of conversation Amanda heard many interesting anecdotes of her ancestors from Mrs. Bruce. Her mother was also mentioned, and Mrs. Bruce, by dwelling on her worth, made amends, in some degree, to Amanda for having called her picture lumber. She retired to her chamber with her mind at once softened and elevated by hearing of her mother's virtues.— She called upon her, upon her father's spirit, upon them whose kindred souls were re-united in Heaven, to bless their child, to strengthen, to support her in the thorny path marked out for her to take; nor to cease their tutelary care till she was joined to them by Providence.

CHAP.

They returned from the gallery to the parlour, and in the course of conversation Amanda heard many interesting anecdotes of her ancestors from Mrs. Bruce. Her mother was also much interested, and **MIX. D. P. A. H. C.** worth made amends in some degree for the having called her picture lumber. She visited her chamber with her mind at once settled and elevated by hearing of her mother's virtues.

Such on the ground the fading rose we see,
By some rude blast torn from the parent tree!
The daffodil, so leans his languid head,
Newly mown down upon his grassy bed!

BLEET.

EXPERIENCE convinced Amanda that the change in her situation was, if possible, more pleasing than she expected it would be. Mrs. Duncan was the kindest and most attentive of friends. Mrs. Bruce was civil and obliging, and her little pupils were docile and affectionate. — Could she have avoided retrospection, she would have been happy; but the remembrance of past events was too deeply impressed upon her mind to be erased; it mingled in the visions of the night,
in

in the avocations of the day, and in the meditations of her lonely hours, forcing from her heart the sighs of regret and tenderness, her mornings were devoted to her pupils, and in the evenings she sometimes walked with Mrs. Duncan, sometimes read aloud whilst she and her aunt were working ; but whenever they were engaged in chatting about family affairs, or at a game of piquet (which was often the case) as Mrs. Bruce neither loved walking or working, she always took that opportunity of retiring from the room, and either rambled through the dark and intricate windings of the Abbey, or about the grounds contiguous to it ; she sighed whenever she passed the Chapel which contained the picture of her mother ; it was in a ruinous condition, but a thick foliage of ivy partly hid, while it proclaimed its decay ; the windows were broken in many places, but all too high to admit the possibility of her gaining admittance through them, and the door was strongly secured by massy bars of iron, as was every door which had a communication with the eastern part of the Abbey.— A fortnight passed away at the Abbey without any thing happening to disturb the tranquillity which reigned in it. No one approached it, except a few of the wandering children of poverty, and its inhabitants seemed perfectly content with their seclusion

seclusion from the world. Amanda, by Mrs. Duncan's desire, had told Mrs. Dermot to direct her letters to a town about five miles from the Abbey ; thither a man went every day, but constantly returned without one for her.

" Why," she asked herself, " this anxiety for a letter, this disappointment at not receiving one, when I neither expect to hear any thing interesting or agreeable ? Mrs. Dermot has already said she had no means of hearing about Lord Mortimer, and, even if she had, why should I desire such intelligence, torn as I am from him for ever ?"

At the expiration of another week an incident happened, which again destroyed the composure of our heroine. Mrs. Bruce, one morning hastily entered the room, where she and Mrs. Duncan were sitting with the little girls, and begged they would not stir from it till she told them to do so, as the Marquis of Rosline's steward was below stairs, and if he knew of their residence at the Abbey, she was confident he would reveal it to his Lord, which she had no doubt would occasion her own dismissal from it. The Ladies assured her they would not leave the apartment, and she retired, leaving them astonished at the agitation she betrayed.

In

In about two hours she returned, and said she came to release them from confinement as the steward had departed. "He has brought unexpected intelligence," said she; "the Marquis and his family are coming down to the Castle; the season is so far advanced I did not suppose they would visit it till next summer: I must therefore," continued she, addressing her niece, "send to the neighbouring town to procure lodgings for you till the family leave the country, as no doubt some of them will come to the Abbey, and to find you in it would, I can assure you, be attended with unpleasant consequences to me."

Mrs. Duncan begged "she would not suffer the least uneasiness on her account, and proposed that very day leaving the Abbey."

"No," Mrs. Bruce replied, "there was no necessity for quitting it for a few days longer, the family," continued she, "are coming down upon a joyful occasion, to celebrate the nuptials of the Marquis's daughter, Lady Euphrasia Sutherland."

"Lady Euphrasia's nuptials!" exclaimed Amanda, in an agitated voice, and forgetting her own situation, "To whom is she going to be married?"

"To

"To Lord Mortimer," Mrs. Bruce replied, "the Earl of Cherbury's only son, a very fine young man. I am told the affair has been long talked of; but ——" Here she was interrupted by a deep sigh, or rather groan, from the unfortunate Amanda, who at the same moment fell back on her chair, pale, and without motion. Mrs. Duncan screamed, and flew to her assistance. Mrs. Bruce, equally frightened, though less affected, ran for restoratives, and the children clasped her knees and wept. From her pensive look and manner Mrs. Duncan suspected, from their first acquaintance, that her heart had experienced a disappointment of the tenderest nature. Her little girls too had told her that they had seen Miss Donald crying over a picture. Her suspicions concerning such a disappointment were now confirmed by the sudden emotion and illness of Amanda; but she had all the delicacy which belongs to true sensibility, and determined never to let Amanda know she conjectured the source of her sorrows, certain as she was that they had never originated from any misconduct.

Mrs. Bruce's drops restored Amanda's senses; but she felt weak and trembling, and begged she might be supported to her room to lie down on the bed. Mrs. Bruce and Mrs. Duncan accordingly led

led her to it. The former almost immediately retired, and the tears of Amanda now burst forth. She wept a long time without intermission, and as soon as her sobs would permit her to speak, begged Mrs. Duncan to leave her to herself. Mrs. Duncan knew too well the luxury of secret grief to deny her the enjoyment of so melancholy a feast, and directly withdrew.

The wretched Amanda then asked herself "if she had not known before, that the sacrifice she made Lord Cherbury would lead to the event she now regretted?" It was true she did know it; but whenever an idea of its taking place occurred, she had so sedulously driven it from her mind, that she at last almost ceased to think about it; was he to be united to any other woman than Lady Euphrasia she thought she would not be so wretched. "Oh, Mortimer! beloved of my soul!" she cried, "were you going to be united to a woman sensible of your worth, and worthy of your noble heart, in the knowledge of your happiness my misery would be lessened; but what an union of misery must minds so uncongenial as your's, and Lady Euphrasia's form! Alas! am I not wretched enough in contemplating my own prospect of unhappiness, but that your's also must be obtruded on me."

"Yet

" Yet perhaps, she continued, the evils I dread on Lord Mortimer's account may be averted : — Oh ! that they may," said she, with fervor, and raising her hands and eyes, " Soften, gracious Heaven ! soften the flinty nature of Lady Euphrasia : Oh ! render her sensible of the blessing you bestow, in giving her Lord Mortimer, and render her not only capable of inspiring, but of feeling tenderness. May she prove to him the tender friend, the faithful, the affectionate companion, the unfortunate Amanda would have been. Oh ! may she build her happiness on his, and may his be great as his virtues, extensive as his charities, and may the knowledge of it sooth my afflicted heart."

Her spirits were a little elevated by the fervency of her language ; but it was a transient elevation ; the flush it spread over her cheeks soon died away, and her tears again began to flow.

" Alas !" she cried, " in a few days, it will be criminal to think of Lord Mortimer as I have hitherto done, and I shall blush," continued she, gazing at his picture, " to contemplate this dear shadow, when I reflect its original is the husband of Lady Euphrasia."

The dinner bell now sounded through the Abbey, and almost at the same minute she heard a tap at her

her door. She started, and reflected for the first time, that her deep dejection would naturally excite suspicions as to its source, if longer indulged. — Shocked at the idea of incurring them, she hastily wiped away her tears, and opening the door, found her friend Mrs. Duncan at it, who begged she would come down to dinner. Amanda did not refuse, but was obliged to use the supporting arm of her friend to reach the parlour. She could not eat; with difficulty could she restrain her tears, or answer the inquiries Mrs. Bruce made after what she supposed a mere bodily indisposition. She forced herself, however, to continue in the parlour till after tea, when cards being produced, she had an opportunity of going out, and indulging her anguish without fear of interruption: Unable, however, to walk far, she repaired to the old Chapel, and sitting down by it, leaned her head against its decayed and ivy-covered walls. She had scarcely sat in this manner a minute when the stones gave way, with a noise which terrified her, and she would have fallen backwards, had she not caught at some projecting wood. She hastily rose, and found that the ivy entirely concealed the breach. She examined it however, and perceived it large enough to admit her into the Chapel. A sudden pleasure pervaded her heart at the idea of being
able

able to enter it, and examine the picture she had so long wished to behold. There was nothing to oppose her entrance but the ivy. This she parted with difficulty, but so as not to strip it from the wall, and after stepping over the fallen rubbish, she found herself in the body of the Chapel. The silent hour of twilight was now advanced, but the moon-beams that darted through the broken roof prevented the Chapel from being involved in utter darkness. Already had the owls begun their strains of melancholy on its mouldering pillars, while the ravens croaked amongst the luxurient trees that rustled round it, dusty and moth-eaten banners were suspended from the walls, and rusty casques shields and spears were promiscuously heaped together, the useless armour of those, over whose remains Amanda now trod with a light and trembling foot; she looked for the picture, and perceived one reclined against the wall near the altar. She wiped away the dust, and perceived this was indeed the one she sought, the one her father had so often described to her, the light was too imperfect for her to distinguish the features, and she resolved, if possible, to come at an earlier hour the ensuing evening. She felt impressed with reverential awe as she stood before it. She recollected the pathetic manner in which her father had mentioned

mentioned his emotions as he gazed upon it, and her tears began to flow for the disastrous fate of her parents and her own. She sunk in an agony of grief, which mournful remembrances and present calamities excited; upon the steps of that altar, where Fitzalan and Malvina had plighted their irrevocable vows, she leaned her arm on the rails, but her face was turned to the picture, as if it could see and would pity her distress. She remained in this situation till the striking of the Abbey clock warned her to depart. In going towards the entrance she perceived a small arched door at the opposite side, as the apartments Lady Malvina had occupied were in this part of the building, she resolved on visiting them before she left the Abbey, lest the breach in the wall should be discovered ere she returned to it. She returned to the parlour ere the Ladies had finished their game of piquet, and the next evening, immediately after tea, repaired to the Chapel, leaving them engaged as usual at cards. She stood a few minutes before it, to see if any one was near; but perceiving no object she again entered it. — She had now sufficient light to examine the picture, though faded by the damp, it yet retained that loveliness for which its original was so admired, and which Amanda had so often heard eloquently described

described by her father. She contemplated it with awe, love and pity. Her heart swelled with the emotions it excited, and gave way to its feelings in tears. To weep before the shade of her mother, seemed to assuage the bitterness of those feelings, she pronounced the name of her parents, she called herself their wretched orphan, a stranger, and a dependant, in the mansion of her ancestors. She pronounced the name of Lord Mortimer in the impassioned accents of tenderness and distress, as she thus indulged the sorrows of her soul in tears and lamentations; she suddenly heard a faint noise, like an advancing footstep near her. She started up, for she had been kneeling before her mother's picture, terrified lest her visit to the Chapel had been discovered, which she knew, if the case, would mortally disoblige Mrs. Bruce, though why she should be so averse to any one's visiting it she could not conceive. She listened in trembling anxiety a few minutes; all again was still, and she returned to the parlour, where she found the Ladies as she had left them, determined, notwithstanding her late fright, to return the next evening to the Chapel, and visit the apartments that were her mother's.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

What beck'ning ghost, along the moon-light shade,

Invites my steps? —

POPE.

THE next evening Amanda's patience was put to the test; for after tea Mrs. Duncan proposed a walk, which seemed to cut off her hopes of visiting the Chapel that evening; but after strolling some time about the valley, complaisance for her aunt made Mrs. Duncan return to the parlour, where she was expected to take her usual hand at piquet. The hour was late, and the sky so gloomy, that the moon, though at its full, could scarcely penetrate the darkness; notwithstanding all this Amanda resolved on going to the Chapel,

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considering this as, in all probability, the only opportunity she would have of visiting the apartments her mother had occupied (which she had an irrepressible desire to enter) as in two days she was to accompany Mrs. Duncan to lodgings in the neighbouring town; she accordingly said she had a mind to walk a little longer. Mrs. Bruce bid her beware of catching cold, and Mrs. Duncan said she was too fond of solitary rambles; but no opposition being made to her intention she hurried to the Chapel, and entering the little arched door found herself in a lofty hall, in the centre of which was a grand staircase, the whole enlightened by a large gothic window at the head of the stairs. She ascended them with trepidation, for her footsteps produced a hollow echo, which added something awful to the gloom that enveloped her. On gaining the top of the stairs she saw two large folding doors on either side, both closed. She knew the direction to take, and, by a small exertion of strength, pulled the one on the left side open, and perceived a long gallery, which she knew was terminated by the apartments she wanted to visit: Its almost total darkness, however, nearly conquered her wish, and shook her resolution of proceeding; but ashamed, even to herself, to give way to superstitious fears, or turn back without gratifying

her inclination after going so far, she advanced into the gallery, though with a trembling step, and as she let the door out of her hand, it shut too with a violence that shook the whole building. — The gallery on one side had a row of arched doors, and on the other an equal number of windows ; but so small, and placed so high, as scarcely to admit a ray of light. Amanda's heart began to beat with unusual quickness, and she thought she should never reach the end of the gallery. — She at last came to a door, it was closed, not fastened ; she pushed it gently open, and could just discern a spacious room ; this she supposed had been her mother's dressing-room ; the moon-beams, as if to aid her wish of examining it, suddenly darted through the casements. Cheered by the unexpected light, she advanced into the room ; at the upper end of it something in white attracted her notice : She concluded it to be the portrait of Lady Malvina's mother, which she had been informed hung in this room. She went up to examine it ; but her horror may be better conceived than described, when she found herself not by a picture, but by the real form of a woman, with a death-like countenance ! She screamed wildly at the terrifying spectre, for such she believed it to be, and quick as lightning flew from

the room. Again was the moon obscured by a cloud, and she involved in utter darkness. She ran with such violence, that, as she reached the door at the end of the gallery, she fell against it. Extremely hurt, she had not power to move for a few minutes; but while she involuntarily paused she heard approaching footsteps. Wild with terror, she instantly recovered her faculties, and attempted opening it; but it resisted all her efforts. "Protect me, Heaven!" she exclaimed, and at the moment felt an icy hand upon her's! Her senses instantly receded, and she sunk to the floor. When she recovered from her insensibility, she perceived a glimmering light around her. She opened her eyes with fearfulness, but no object appeared, and, to her great joy, she saw the door standing open, and found that the light proceeded from the large window. She instantly rose, and descended the staircase with as much haste as her trembling limbs could make; but again, what was her horror when, on entering the Chapel, the first object she beheld was the same that had already alarmed her so much! She made a spring to escape through the entrance, but the apparition, with a rapidity equal to her own, glided before her, and with a hollow voice, as she waved an emaciated hand, exclaimed, "Forbear to go."

A deadly faintness again came over Amanda ; she sunk upon a broken seat, and put her hand over her eyes to shut out the frightful vision.

" Lose," continued the figure, in a hollow voice, " lose your superstitious fears, and in me behold not an airy inhabitant of the other world, but a sinful, sorrowing, and repentant woman."

The terrors of Amanda gave way to this unexpected address ; but her surprise was equal to what these terrors had been ; she withdrew her hand, and gazed attentively on the form before her.

" If my eye, if my ear deceives me not," it continued, " you are a descendant of the Dunreath family. I heard you last night, when you imagined no being near, call yourself the unfortunate orphan of Lady Malvina Fitzalan."

" I am, indeed, her child," replied Amanda :—" Tell me then by what means you have been brought hither ; you called yourself a stranger, and a dependant in the house of your ancestors."

" I am both," said Amanda ; " my real name is concealed from circumstances peculiarly distressing, and I have been brought to the Abbey as an instructress to two children related to the person who takes care of it."

" My prayers at length," exclaimed the ghastly figure, raising her hollow eyes and emaciated
M 3 hands,

hands, "my prayers have reached the Throne of Mercy, and, as a proof that my repentance is accepted, power is given me to make reparation for the injuries I have committed."

"Oh! thou," she cried, turning to Amanda, "whose form revives in my remembrance the youth and beauty blasted by my means, if thy mind, as well as face, resembles Lady Malvina's, thou wilt, in pity to my sufferings, forbear to reproach my crimes. In me," she continued, "you behold the guilty, but contrite widow of the Earl of Dunreath."

Amanda started: "Oh, gracious Heaven!" she exclaimed, "can this be possible?"

"Have you not been taught to execrate my name?" asked the unhappy woman.

"Oh! no," replied Amanda,

"No!" replied Lady Dunreath, "because your mother was an angel; but did she not leave a son?"

"Yes," said Amanda. — "And does he live?"

"Alas! I do not know," replied Amanda, melting into tears; "distress separated us, and he is not more ignorant of my destiny than I am of his."

"It is I," exclaimed Lady Dunreath, "have been the cause of this distress; it is I, sweet and
fainted

fainted Malvina, have been the cause of calamity to your children; but, blessed be the wonder-working hand of Providence," she continued, "which has given me an opportunity of making some amends for my cruelty and injustice: But," she proceeded, "as I know the chance which led you to the Chapel, I dread to detain you longer, lest it should lead to a discovery. Was it known that you saw me, all my intentions would be defeated; be secret then, I conjure you, more on your account than my own, and let not Mrs. Bruce have the smallest intimation of what has passed; but return to-morrow night, and you shall receive from me a sacred deposit, which will, if affluence can do it, render you completely happy. In the mean time do you throw upon paper a brief account of your life, that I may know the incidents which so providentially brought you to the Abbey." Amanda promised to obey her in every respect, and the unfortunate woman, unable longer to speak, kissed her hand, and retired through the little arched door. Amanda left the Chapel, and full of wonder, pity and expectation, moved mechanically to the parlour. Mrs. Bruce and Mrs. Duncan had just risen from cards, and both were instantly struck with her pallid and disordered looks. They inquired if she was ill: Their inquiries

roused her from a deep reverie. She recollected the danger of exciting suspicions, and replied, "she was only fatigued with walking, and begged leave to retire to her chamber." Mrs. Duncan attended her to it, and would have sat with her till she saw her in bed, had Amanda allowed; but it was not her intention indeed to go to bed, for some time; when left to herself, the surprising and interesting discovery she had made, had so agitated her, that she could scarcely compose herself enough to take up a pen to narrate the particulars of her life, as Lady Dunreath had requested. She sketched them in a brief yet hasty manner, sufficiently strong, however, to interest the feelings of a sympathetic heart; the tender and peculiar sorrows of her own she omitted; her life was represented sufficiently calamitous, without mentioning the incurable sorrow which disappointed love had entailed upon it. She was glad she had executed her task with haste, as Mrs. Duncan called upon her in the course of the next day to assist in packing for their removal to the neighbouring town. The evening was far advanced ere she had an opportunity of repairing to the Chapel, where she found the unfortunate Lady Dunreath resting, in an attitude of deep despondence, against the rails of the altar.

Her

Her pale and woe-worn countenance—her emaciated form—her solitary situation—all inspired Amanda with the tenderest compassion, and she dropped a tear upon the cold and withered hand which was extended to her's, as she approached. "I merit not the tear of pity," said the unhappy woman, "yet it casts a gleam of comfort on my heart to meet with a being who feels for its sorrows, but the moments are precious. She then led Amanda to the altar, and stooping down, desired her assistance in removing a small marble flag beneath it. This being effected, with difficulty, Amanda perceived an iron box, which she also assisted in raising. Lady Dunreath then took a key from her bosom, with which she opened it, and took from thence a sealed paper. "Receive," said she, presenting it to Amanda, "receive the will of your grandfather, a sacred deposit, entrusted to your care for your brother, the rightful heir of the Earl of Dunreath. Oh! may its restoration, and my sincere repentance, atone for its long detention and concealment: Oh! may the fortune it will bestow upon you, as well as your brother, be productive to both of the purest happiness!"

Trembling with joyful surprise, Amanda received the paper: "Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed she, "is it possible? Do I really hold the will of my

grandfather—a will which will entitle my brother to affluence.—Oh! Providence, how mysterious are thy ways! Oh! Oscar, beloved of my heart,” she continued, forgetting at that moment every consideration of self, ‘could thy sister have possibly foreseen her sorrows would have led to such a discovery, half their bitterness would have been allayed. Yes, my father, one of thy children may at least be happy, and in witnessing that happiness, the other will find a mitigation of misery.” Tears burst from her as she spoke, and relieved the strong emotions that swelled her heart, almost to bursting.

“Oh! talk not of your misery,” said Lady Dunreath, with a convulsive sigh, “lest you drive me to despair. For ever must I accuse myself of being the real source of calamity to Lady Malvina and her children.”

“Excuse me,” cried Amanda, wiping her eyes, “I should be ungrateful to Heaven and to you if I dwelt upon my sorrows; but let me not neglect this opportunity,” she continued, “of inquiring, if there is any way in which I can possibly serve you. Is there no friend to whom I could apply in your name, to have you released from this cruel and unjustifiable confinement.”

“No,” said Lady Dunreath, “no such friend exists; when I had the power to do so, I never conciliated

conciliated friendship, and if I am still remembered in the world, it is only with contempt and abhorrence. The laws of my country would certainly liberate me at once; but if things turn out as I expect, there will be no occasion for an application to them, and any step of that kind at present might be attended with the most unpleasant consequences; your future prosperity, my present safety, all depend on secrecy for a short period. — In this paper, drawing one from her pocket, and presenting it to Amanda, I have explained my reason for desiring such secrecy. Amanda put it with the will into her bosom, and gave in return the little narrative she had sketched. They both assisted in replacing the box and flag, and then seated themselves on the steps of the altar. — Amanda informed Lady Dunreath of her intended departure the next day from the Abbey, and the occasion of it. Lady Dunreath expressed the utmost impatience to have every thing put into a proper train for the avowal of the will, declaring that the sight of the rightful heir in possession of the Abbey, would calm the agitations of a spirit which, she believed, would soon forsake its earthly habitation. Tears of compassion fell from Amanda at these words, and she shuddered to think that the unfortunate woman might die abandoned, and

bereft of comfort ; again she urged her to think of some expedient for procuring immediate liberty, and again Lady Dunreath assured her it was impossible.

Absorbed in a kind of sympathetic melancholy, they forgot the danger of delay till the Abbey clock chiming half an hour past ten, which was later than Mrs. Bruce's usual hour of supper, startled and alarmed them both. "Go, go," cried Lady Dunreath, with a wild expression of fear, "go, or we are undone!" Amanda pressed her hand in silence, and trembling departed from the Chapel. She stopped at the outside to listen, for by her ear alone could she now receive any intimation of danger, as the night was too dark to permit any object to be discerned; but the breeze sighing amongst the trees of the valley, and the melancholy murmur of water-falls were the only sounds she heard. She groped along the wall of the Chapel to keep in the path, which wound from it to the entrance of the Abbey, and in doing so passed her hand over the cold face of a human being; terrified, an involuntary scream burst from her, and she faintly articulated: "Defend me, Heaven!" In the next moment she was seized round the waist, and her senses were receding, when Mrs. Duncan's voice recalled them. She apologized

apologized to Amanda for giving her such a fright; but said, "that her uneasiness was so great at her long absence that, attended by a servant, she had come in quest of her."

Mrs. Duncan's voice relieved Amanda from the horror of thinking she had met with a person who would insult her; but it had given rise to a new alarm. She feared she had been traced to the Chapel, that her discourse with Lady Dunreath had been overheard, and of course the secret of the will discovered, and that Mrs. Duncan, amiable as she was, might sacrifice friendship to interest and consanguinity. This idea overwhelmed her with anguish; her deep and heavy sighs, her violent trembling, alarmed Mrs. Duncan, who hastily called the servant to assist her in supporting Amanda home; drops were then administered, but they would have wanted their usual efficacy with the poor night wanderer, had she not soon been convinced by Mrs. Duncan's manner, she had not made the dreaded discovery.

Amanda would have retired to her chamber before supper, but that she feared distressing Mrs. Duncan by doing so, who would have imputed her indisposition to her fright. — She accordingly remained in the parlour, but with a mind so occupied by the interesting events of the evening,
that

that she soon forgot the purpose for which she sat down to table, and neither heeded what was doing or saying. From this reverie she was suddenly roused by the sound of a name for ever dear and precious, which in a moment had power to recall her wandering ideas. She raised her eyes, and with a sad intentness fixed them on Mrs. Bruce, who continued to talk of the approaching nuptials of Lord Mortimer. Tears now fell from Amanda in spite of her efforts to restrain them, and while drooping her head to wipe them away, she caught the eyes of Mrs. Duncan fastened on her with an expression of mingled pity and curiosity. A deep crimson suffused the face of Amanda at the consciousness of having betrayed the secret of her heart; but her confusion was inferior to her grief, and the rich suffusion of one soon gave place to the deadly hue of the other. "Ah!" thought she, "what is now the acquisition of wealth when happiness is beyond my reach!" Yet scarcely had she conceived the thought ere she wished it buried in oblivion: "Is the comfort of independence, the power of dispensing happiness to others, nothing?" she asked herself. "Do they not merit gratitude of the most pure thankfulness, of the most fervent nature, to Providence?" They do," she cried, and
paid

paid them at the moment in the silent tribute of her heart.

It was late ere the Ladies separated for the night, and as soon as Amanda had secured the door of her chamber, she drew from her bosom the papers so carefully deposited in them, and sat down to peruse the narrative of Lady Dunreath.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIV.

For true repentance never comes too late ;
As soon as born she makes herself a shroud,
The weeping mantle of a fleecy cloud,
And swift as thought her airy journey takes,
Her hand Heav'n's azure gate with trembling strikes.
The stars do with amazement on her look :
She tells her story in so sad a tone,
That angels start from bliss, and give a groan.

LEE.

ADORING the Power who has given me
means of making restitution for my injustice
I take up my pen, to disclose to your view, oh !
lovely orphan of the injured Malvina, the frailties
of a heart which has long been tortured with the
retrospect of past and the pressure of present evil.
Convinced,

Convinced, as I have already said, that if your mind, as well as form, resembles your mother's, you will, while you condemn the sinner, commiserate the penitent, and, touched by that penitence, offer up a prayer to Heaven (and the prayers of innocence are ever availing) for its forgiveness unto me. Many years are now elapsed since the commencement of my confinement, years which diminished my hope of being able to make reparation for the injustice and cruelty I had done Lady Malvina Fitzalan, but left unabated my desire of doing so.

Ah, sweet Malvina ! from thy soft voice I was doomed never to hear my pardon pronounced ; but from thy child I may, perhaps, have it accorded ; if so, from that blissful abode, where thou now enjoyest felicity, if the departed souls of the happy are allowed to view the transactions of the world, thine, I am convinced, will behold, with benignancy and compassion, the wretch, who covers herself with shame to atone for her injuries to thee.

But I must restrain these effusions of my heart, lest I encroach too much upon the limited time allotted to make what I may call my confession, and inform you of particulars necessary to be known.

My

My cruelty and insolence to Lady Malvina you no doubt already know, in my conduct to her. I forgot the obligations her mother had conferred upon me, whose patronage and kind protection laid the foundation of my prosperity. I rejoiced at her marriage with Captain Fitzalan, as a step that would deprive her of her father's favour, and place her in that state of poverty which would conceal charms I detested for being superior to my daughter's. — The Earl's resentment was violent at first; but with equal surprise and concern I soon perceived it gradually subsiding; the irrevocableness of the deed, the knowledge that he wanted no acquisition of fortune; above all, Fitzalan's noble descent, and the graces and virtues he possessed, worthy of the highest station, dwelt upon the Earl's imagination, and pleaded strongly in extenuation of his daughter; alarmed lest my schemes against her should be rendered abortive, like an evil spirit I contrived to rekindle, by means of my agents, the Earl's resentment, they represented the flagrant, the daring contempt Lady Malvina had shewn to paternal authority, and that too easy a forgiveness to it might influence her sister to similar conduct with a person perhaps less worthy, and more needy, if possible, than Fitzalan. This last suggestion had the desired effect, and Lady Malvina he de-
clared

clared in future should be considered as an alien to his family.

I now hoped my ambitious views, relative to my daughter, would be accomplished : I had long wished her united to the Marquis of Rosline ; but he had for years been Lady Malvina's admirer, and was so much attached to her, that on her marriage he went abroad. My arts were then tried to prevail on the Earl to make a will in Lady Augusta's favour ; but this was a point I could not accomplish, and I lived in continual apprehension, lest his dying intestate should give Lady Malvina the fortune I wanted to deprive her of. Anxious, however, to procure a splendid establishment for my daughter, I every where said there was no doubt but she would be sole heiress to the Earl. At the expiration of three years the Marquis returned to his native country ; his unfortunate passion was subdued, he heard and believed the reports I circulated, and stimulated by avarice, his leading propensity, offered his hand to my daughter, and was accepted. The Earl gave her a large portion in ready money ; but, notwithstanding all my endeavours, would not make a settlement of any of his estates upon her : I however still hoped, and the Marquis, from what I said, believed that she would possess all his fortune. —

My

My daughter's nuptials added to my natural haughtiness; they also increased my love of pleasure, by affording me more amply the means of gratifying it at the sumptuous entertainments at the Marquis's Castle; engaged continually in them the Earl, whose infirmities confined him to the Abbey, was left to solitude, and the care of his domestics: My neglect, you will say, was impolitie whilst I had any point to carry with him; but Providence has so wisely ordained it that vice should still defeat itself. Had I always acted in uniformity with the tenderness I once shewed the Earl, I have little doubt but what at last I should have prevailed on him to act as I pleased; but infatuated by pleasure, my prudence, no, it deserves not such an appellation, forsook me; though the Earl's body was a prey to the infirmities of age, his mind knew none of its imbecilities, and he sensibly felt, and secretly resented my neglect; the more he reflected on it, the more he contrasted it with the attention he was accustomed to receive from his banished Malvina, and the resentment I had hitherto kept alive in his mind against her gradually subsided, so that he was well prepared to give a favourable reception to the little innocent advocate she sent to plead her cause. — My terror, my dismay, when I surprised the little

Oscar

Oscar at the knee of his grandfather, are not to be described ! The tears, which the agitated parent shed upon the infant's lovely cheek seemed to express affection for its mother, and regret for its rigour to her ; yet amidst these tears I thought I perceived an exulting joy as he gazed upon the child, which seemed to say, " Thou wilt yet be the pride, the prop, the ornament, of my ancient house." After circumstances proved I was right in my interpretation of his looks : I drove the little Oscar from the room with frantic rage. The Earl was extremely affected. He knew the violence of my temper, and felt too weak to enter into any altercation with me ; he therefore reserved his little remaining strength and spirits to arrange his affairs, and by passiveness seemed yielding to my sway ; but I soon found, though silent, he was resolute. My preventing your brother from again gaining access to his grandfather, and my repulsing your mother when she requested an interview with the Earl, I suppose you already know. — Gracious Heaven ! my heart sickens, even at this remote period, when I reflect on the night I turned her from her paternal home, from that mansion, under whose roof her benevolent mother had sheltered my tender years from the rude storms or adverse life. Oh ! black and base ingratitude, dire
return

return for the benefits I had received, yet, almost at the very instant I committed so cruel an action, she was avenged. No language can describe my horrors as conscience represented to me the barbarity of my conduct. I trembled with involuntary fears; sounds had power to terrify; every blast which shook the Abbey (and dreadful was the tempest of that night) made me shrink, as if about to meet with an instantaneous punishment.

I trembled at my undivulged crimes
Unwhipt of justice. —

I knew the Earl expected either to see or hear from your mother; he was ignorant of the reception they had met from me, and I was determined, if possible, he should continue so. As soon as certified of Lady Malvina's departure from the neighbourhood of the Abbey, I contrived a letter, in Captain Fitzalan's name, to the Earl, filled with the most cutting and insolent reproaches to him for his conduct to his daughter, and imputing her precipitate departure from Scotland to it. These unjust reproaches I trusted would irritate the Earl, and work another revolution in his mind, but I was disappointed; he either believed the letter a forgery, or else resolved the children should not suffer

suffer for the fault of the parent, he accordingly sent for his agent, an eminent lawyer in one of the neighbouring towns. This man was lately deceased, but his son, bred to his profession, obeyed the summons from the Abbey. I dreaded his coming, but scarcely had I seen him ere this dread was lost in emotions till then unknown; a soft, a tender, an ardent passion took possession of my heart, on beholding a man, in the very prime of life, adorned with every natural and acquired grace that could please the eye and ear, married at an early period, possessed of all the advantages of art, said and believing myself to be handsome, I flattered myself I might on his heart make an impression equal to that he had done on mine; if so I thought how easily could the Earl's intentions, in favour of his daughter, be defeated, for that love will readily make sacrifices I had often heard. A will was made, but my new ideas and schemes divested me of uneasiness about it. — Melrofs continued at the Abbey much longer than he need have done, and when he left it his absence was of short continuance. The Earl's business was his pretext for his long and frequent visits; but the real motive of them he soon discovered to me, encouraged no doubt by the partiality I betrayed. I shall not dwell upon this part of my story,

story, but I completed my crime by violating my conjugal fidelity, and we entered into an engagement to be united whenever I was at liberty, which, from the infirm state of the Earl, I now believed would shortly be the case. In consequence of this Melross agreed to put into my hands the Earl's will, which had been entrusted to his care, and he acknowledged drawn up entirely in favour of Lady Malvina Fitzalan and her offspring: It was witnessed by friends of his, whom he had no doubt of bribing to silence. You may wonder that the will was not destroyed as soon as I had it in my possession; but to do so never was my intention; by keeping it in my hands I trusted I should have a power over my daughter, which duty and affection had never yet given me. Violent and imperious in her disposition, I doubted not but she and the Marquis, who nearly resembled her in these particulars, would endeavour to prevent, from pride and selfishness, my union with Melross; but to know they were in my power would crush all opposition I supposed, and obtain their most flattering notice for him—a notice, from my pride, I found essential to my tranquillity. The Earl requested Melross to inquire about Lady Malvina, which he promised to do; but, it is almost unnecessary to say, never fulfilled such a promise. In
about

about a year after the commencement of my attachment for Melrofs he expired, and the Marchioness inherited his possessions by means of a forged will executed by Melrofs. Ignorant indeed at the time that it was by iniquity she obtained them, though her conduct since that period has proved she would not have suffered any compunction from such a knowledge, I removed from the Abbey to an estate about fifteen miles from it, which the Earl had left me, and here, much sooner than decency would have warranted, avowed my intention of marrying Melrofs to the Marquis and Marchioness of Rosline. The consequences of this avowal were pretty much what I had expected. — The Marquis, more by look than words, expressed his contempt; but the Marchioness openly declared her indignation, to think of uniting myself to a being so low in life and fortune; she said, as Melrofs, was an insult to the memory of her father, and a degradation to his illustrious house, it would also be a confirmation of the scandalous reports which had already been circulated to the prejudice of my character about him. Her words roused all the violence of my soul: I upbraided her with ingratitude to a parent, who had stepped beyond the bounds of rigid propriety to give her an increase of fortune. My words alarmed her and the Mar-

quis. They hastily demanded an explanation of them. I did not hesitate in giving one, protesting at the same time that I would no longer hurt my feelings on their account, as I found no complaisance to my wishes, but immediately avow Lady Malvina Fitzalan the lawful heiress of the Earl of Dunreath. The Marquis and Marchioness changed colour; I saw they trembled lest I should put my threats into execution, though with consummate art they pretended to disbelieve that such a will as I mentioned existed.

"Beware," cried I, rising from my chair to quit the room, "lest I give you too convincing a proof of its reality; except I meet with the attention and complaisance I have a right to expect, I shall no longer act contrary to the dictates of my conscience by concealing it. Unlimited mistress of my own actions, what but affection for my daughter could make me consult her upon any of them? Her disapprobation proceeds alone from selfishness, since an alliance with Melrofs, from his profession, accomplishments, and birth, would not disgrace a house even more illustrious than the one she is descended from or connected to. I retired to my chamber, secretly exulting at the idea of having conquered all opposition, for I plainly perceived by the Marquis and Marchioness's manner, they

were convinced it was in my power to deprive them of their newly acquired possessions, which, to secure, I doubted not their sacrificing their pride to my wishes : I exulted in the idea of having my nuptials with Melross celebrated with that splendor I always delighted in, and the prospect of having love and vanity gratified, filled me with a kind of intoxicating happiness. In a few hours after I had retired to my room, the Marchioness sent to request an interview with me, which I readily granted. She entered the apartment with a respectful air, very unusual to her, and immediately made an apology for her late conduct. She acknowledged I had reason to be offended ; but a little reflection had convinced her of her error, and both she and the Marquis thanked me for consulting them about the change I was about making in my situation, and would pay every attention in their power to the man I had honoured with my choice. That I did not think the Marchioness sincere in her professions you may believe, but complaisance was all I required. I accompanied her to the Marquis ; a general reconciliation ensued, and Melross was presented to them.

“ In about two days after this the Marchioness came into my dressing-room one morning, and told me she had a proposal to make, which she

hoped would be agreeable to me to comply with: It was the Marquis's intention and her's to go immediately to the Continent, and they had been thinking, if Melross and I would favour them with our company, that we had better defer our nuptials till we reached Paris, which was the first place they intended visiting, as their solemnization in Scotland so soon after the Earl's decease might displease his friends, by whom we were surrounded, and on their return, which would be soon, they would introduce Melross to their connexions, as a man every way worthy of their notice.

“ After a little hesitation I agreed to this plan, for where it interfered not with my own inclinations, I wished to preserve an appearance of propriety to the world, and I could not avoid thinking that my marrying so soon after the Earl's death would draw censure upon me, which I should avoid by the projected tour, as the certain time of my nuptials could not then be ascertained. — Melross submitted cheerfully to our new arrangements, and it was settled farther to preserve appearances that he should go before us to Paris. I supplied him with every thing requisite for making an elegant appearance, and he departed in

in high spirits at the prospect of his splendid establishment for life.

"I counted the moments with impatience for rejoining him, and, as had been settled, we commenced our journey a month after his departure. It was now the middle of winter, and ere we stopped, for the night darkness, almost impenetrable, had veiled the earth, fatigued, and almost exhausted by the cold, I followed the Marquis through a long passage, lighted by a glimmering lamp, to a parlour which was well lighted, and had a comfortable fire. I started with amazement on entering it, at finding myself in a place I thought familiar to me; my surprise, however, was but for an instant, yet I could not help expressing it to the Marquis. — Your eyes, Madam," cried he, with a cruel solemnity, "have not deceived you, for you are now in Dunreath Abbey."

"Dunreath Abbey!" I repeated: "Gracious Heaven! what can be the meaning of this?"

"To hide your folly, your imprudence, your deceit, from the world," he exclaimed; "to prevent your executing the wild projects of a depraved and distempered mind, by entering into an union at once contemptible and preposterous, and to save those, from whom alone you derive your consequence,

quence, by your connexion with them, farther mortification on your account."

"To describe fully the effect of this speech upon a heart like mine is impossible; the fury which pervaded my soul would, I believe, have hurried me into a deed of dire revenge, had I had the power of executing it, my quivering lips could not express my strong indignation.

"And do you then in a country like this," I cried, "dare to think you can deprive me of my liberty?"

"Yes," replied he, with insulting coolness, "when it is known you are incapable of making a proper use of that liberty, you should thank me," he continued, "for palliating your late conduct, by imputing it rather to an intellectual derangement than to total depravity; from what other source than the former could you have asserted that there was a will in Lady Malvina Fitzalan's favour. These words at once developed the cause of his unjustifiable conduct, and proved that there is no real faith between the guilty. From my disposition the Marquis was convinced, that I would assume a haughty sway over him, in consequence of the secret of the will: He also dreaded that passion or caprice might one day induce me to betray that secret, and wrest from him his unlawful possession

essions; thus pride and avarice tempted, and determined him, by confining me, to rid himself of these fears."

"Oh! would to Heaven," cried I, replying to the last part of his speech, "I had proved my assertion; had I done justice to others, I should not have been entangled in the snare of treachery."

"Prove the assertion now," said he, "by shewing me the will, and you may, perhaps," he continued, in a hesitating accent, "find your doing so attended with pleasing consequences. Rage and scorn flashed from my eyes at these words. No," cried I, "had you the power of torturing, you should not tear it from me. I will keep it to atone for my sins, and expose yours to view by restoring it to the right owner. I demanded my liberty, I threatened, supplicated, but all in vain. The Marquis told me I might as well compose myself, for my fate was decided."

"You know," cried he, with a malicious look, "you have no friends to inquire or interfere about you; and, even if you had, when I told them what I believe to be the case, that your senses were disordered, they would never desire to have you released from this confinement. I called for my daughter."—"You will see her no more," he replied,

replied, "the passions she has so long blushed to behold she will no more witness."

"Rather say," I exclaimed, "that she dare not behold her injured parent, but let not the wretch, who has severed the ties of nature, hope to escape unpunished; no, my sufferings will draw a dreadful weight upon her head, and may, when least expected, torture her heart with anguish. Convinced that I was entirely in the Marquis's power, convinced that I had nothing to hope from him or my daughter, rage, horror and agony, at their unjust and audacious treatment, kindled in my breast a sudden frenzy, which strong convulsions only terminated. When I recovered from them I found myself on a bed in a room which, at the first glance, I knew to be the one the late Lady Damereth had occupied, to whose honours I so unworthily succeeded. Mrs. Bruce, who had been housekeeper at the Abbey before my marriage, sat beside me: I hesitated a few minutes whether I should address her as a suppliant or a superior; the latter, however, being most agreeable to my inclinations, I bid her, with an haughty air, which I hoped would awe her into obedience, assist me in rising, and procure some conveyance from the Abbey without delay. The Marquis entered the chamber as I spoke. Compose yourself, Madam," said

said he, "your destiny, I repeat it, is irrevocable; this Abbey is your future residence, and bless those who have afforded your follies such an asylum; it behoves both the Marchioness and me indeed to seclude a woman who might cast imputations on our characters, which those unacquainted with them might believe. I started from the bed, in the loose dress in which they had placed me on it, and stamping round the room demanded my liberty. — The Marquis heard my demand with contemptuous silence, and quitted the room. I attempted to rush after him, but he pushed me back with violence, and closed the door. My feelings again brought on convulsions, which terminated in a delirium and fever. In this situation the Marquis and Marchioness abandoned me, hoping, no doubt, that my disorder would soon lay me in a prison, even more secure than the one they had devoted me to. Many weeks elapsed ere I shewed any symptom of recovery. On regaining my senses I seemed as if awaking from a tedious sleep, in which I had been tortured with frightful visions. The first object my eyes beheld, now blessed with the powers of clear perception, was Mrs. Brace bending over my pillow, with a look of anxiety and grief, which implied a wish, yet a doubt, of my recovery.

"Tell me," said I, faintly, "am I really in Dunreath Abbey, am I really confined within its walls by the order of my child?"

Mrs. Bruce sighed. "Do not disturb yourself with questions now," said she; "the reason Heaven has so mercifully restored, would be ill employed in vain murmurs."

"Vain murmurs!" I repeated, and a deep, desponding sigh burst from my heart. I lay silent a long time after this; the gloom which encompassed me at length grew too dreary to be borne, and I desired Mrs. Bruce to draw back the curtains of the bed and windows. She obeyed, and the bright beams of the sun darting into the room, displayed to my view an object I could not behold without shuddering; this was the portrait of Lady Dunreath exactly opposite the bed. My mind was softened by illness, and I felt in that moment as if her sainted spirit stood before me to awaken my conscience to remorse, and my heart to repentance; the benevolence which had irradiated the countenance of the original with a celestial expression, was powerfully expressed upon the canvas, and recalled, oh! how affectingly to my memory, the period in which this most amiable of women gave me a refuge in her house, in her arms, from the storms of life, and yet her child, I groaned
her.

her child I was accessory in destroying : Oh ! how excruciating were my feelings at this period of awakened conscience ; I no longer inveighed against my sufferings ; I considered them in the light of retribution, and felt an awful resignation take possession of my soul. Yes, groaned I to myself, it is fit that in the very spot in which I triumphed in deceit and cruelty, I should meet the punishment due to my misdeeds.

“ The change in my disposition produced a similar one in my temper, so that Mrs. Bruce found the task of attending me easier than she had imagined it would be ; yet I did not submit to confinement, without many efforts to liberate myself through her means ; but her fidelity to her unnatural employers was not to be shaken : Blushing, however, at my past enormities, I should rather have shrunk from than solicited admission again into the world, had not my ardent desire of making reparation to the descendants of Lady Dunreath influenced me to desire my freedom. Oh ! never did that desire cease—never did a morning dawn, an evening close, without entreating Heaven to allow me means of restoring to the injured their inheritance. Mrs. Bruce, though steady, was not cruel, and nursed me with the tenderest attention till my health was re-established : She then ceased to see me

me except at night, but took care I should always be amply stocked with necessaries. She supplied me with religious and moral books; also materials for writing, if I chose to amuse myself with making comments on them: To those books am I indebted, for being able to endure, with some degree of calmness, my long and dreadful captivity; they enlarged my heart, they enlightened its ideas concerning the Supreme Being, they impressed it with awful submission to his Will, they convinced me more forcibly of my transgressions, yet without exciting despair, for while they shewed the horrors of vice, they proved the efficacy of repentance. Debarred of the common enjoyments of life, air, exercise and society, in vain my heart assured me my punishment was inadequate to my crimes, nature repined, and a total languor seized me. Mrs. Bruce at last told me I should be allowed the range of that part of the building in which I was confined (for I had hitherto been limited to one room) and consequently air from the windows, if I promised to make no attempt for recovering my freedom, an attempt, she assured me, would prove abortive, as none but people attached to the Marquis lived in or about the Abbey, who would immediately betray me to him, and

and if he ever detected such a step, it was his determination to hurry me to France.

“ Certain that he would be capable of such baseness, touched by the smallest indulgence, and eager to procure any recreation, I gave her the most solemn assurances of never attempting to make known my situation: She accordingly unlocked the several doors that had hitherto impeded my progress from one apartment to another, and removed the iron bolts which secured the shutters of the windows. Oh! with what mingled pain and pleasure did I contemplate the rich prospect stretched before them, now that I was debarred from enjoying it; at liberty, I wondered how I could ever have contemplated it with a careless eye, and my spirits, which the air had revived, suddenly sunk into despondence, when I reflected I enjoyed this common blessing but by stealth; yet who (cried I, with agony) can I blame but myself? The choicest gifts of Heaven were mine, and I lost them by my own means; wretch as I was, the first temptation that assailed, warped me from integrity, and my error is marked by the deprivation of every good; with eager, with enthusiastic delight, I gazed on scenes which I had so often before regarded with a careless eye; it seemed

as if I had only now perception to distinguish their beauties ; the season's difference made a material change to me, as all the windows were shut up in winter, except those of the apartment I occupied, which only looked into a gloomy court ; ah ! how welcome to me then was the return of spring, which again restored to me the indulgence of visiting the windows ; how delightful to my eyes the green of the valley, and the glowing bloom of the mountain shrubs just bursting into verdure ; ah ! how soothing to my ear the lulling sound of water-falls, and the lively carol of the birds ; how refreshing the sweetness of the air, the fragrance of the plants, which friendly zephyrs, as if pitying my confinement, wafted through the windows ; the twilight hour was also hailed by me with delight ; it was then I turned my eyes from earth to Heaven, and regarding its blue and spangled vault but as a thin covering between me and myriads of angels, felt a sweet sensation of mingled piety and pleasure, which for the time had power to steep my sorrows in forgetfulness ! But in relating my feelings, I wander from the real purpose of my narrative, and forget that I am describing those feelings to a person who, from my injurious actions, can take but little interest in them.

“ The

“The will I shall deliver to you to night; I advise you, if your brother cannot immediately be found, to put it into the hands of some man, on whose abilities and integrity you can rely; but till you meet with such a person beware of discovering you have it in your possession, lest the Marquis, who, I am sorry to say, I believe capable of almost any baseness, should remove from your knowledge the penitent, whose testimony to the validity of the deed will be so cheerfully given, and is so materially essential: Be secret then, I again conjure you, till every thing is properly arranged for the avowal of your rights; and, oh! may the restoration of all those rights you shall claim, be to you and to your brother productive of every felicity: From your hands, may the wealth it puts into them bestow relief and comfort on the children of adversity; thus yielding to your hearts a pure and permanent satisfaction, which the mere possession of riches, or their expenditure on idle vanities, never can bestow. As much as possible I wish to have my daughter saved from public disgrace: From me you will say she merits not this lenient wish; but, alas! I hold myself accountable for her misconduct; entrusted to my care by Providence I neglected the sacred charge, nor
ever

ever curbed a passion, or laid the foundation of a virtue. Ah! may her wretched parent's prayers be yet availing, may penitence, ere too late, visit her heart, and teach her to regret and expiate her errors. Had she been united to a better man, I think she never would have swerved so widely from nature and from duty; but the selfish soul of the Marquis taught her to regard self as the first consideration in life.

“ Mrs. Bruce informed me that the Marquis had written to Melross, informing him that I had changed my mind, and would think no more about him, and she supposed he had procured some pleasant establishment in France, as no one had ever heard of his returning from it. She made several attempts to prevail on me to give up the will to her; but I resisted all her arts, and was rejoiced to think I had concealed it in a place which would never be suspected. My narrative now concluded, I wait with even trembling impatience for your expected visit; for that moment, in which I shall make some reparation for my injuries to your mother, I am also anxious for the moment, in which I shall receive the promised narrative of your life, from your tears, your words, your manner, I may expect a tale of sorrow; ah! may it only be that gentle

gentle sorrow which yields to the influence of time; and the sweets of friendship and conscious innocence.

“ I cannot forbear describing what I felt on first hearing your voice—a voice so like in its harmonious tones to one I knew had long been silent; impressed with an awful dread, I stood upon the stairs, which I was descending to visit the Chapel, as was my constant custom at the close of day, shivering and appalled, I had not for a few minutes power to move; but when I at last ventured nearer to the door, and saw you kneeling before the dust-covered shade of her I had injured, when I heard you call yourself her wretched orphan, ah! what were my emotions, an awful voice seemed sounding in my ear—Behold the hour of restitution is arrived! Behold a being, whom the hand of Providence has conducted hither to receive reparation for the injustice you did her parents; adore that mighty Hand which thus affords you means of making atonement for your offences. I did adore it; I raised my streaming eyes, my trembling hands to Heaven, and blessed the gracious Power which had granted my prayer. The way, by which I saw you quit my retirement, proved to me your entrance into it was unknown; with

with an impatience, bordering on agony, I waited for the next evening ; it came without bringing you, and no language can express my disappointment ! Dejected I returned to my chamber, which you entered soon after, and where you received so great a fright ; yet, be assured, not a greater one than I experienced, for the gleam of moonlight, which displayed me to you, gave you full to my view, and I beheld the very form and face of Lady Malvina. In form and face may you alone resemble her ; different, far different, be your destiny from her's. Soon may your brother be restored to your arms. Should he then shudder at my name, oh ! teach him, with a mercy like your own, to accord me forgiveness.

“ Ye sweet and precious descendants of this illustrious house—ye rightful heirs of Dunreath-Abbey—may your future joys amply recompense your past sorrows ! May those sorrows be forgotten, or only remembered to temper prosperity, and teach it pity for the woes of others ! May your virtues add to the renown of your ancestors, and entail eternal peace upon your souls ! May their line by you be continued, and continued as a blessing to all around ! May your names be consecrated to posterity by the voice of gratitude,
and

and excite in others an emulation to pursue your courses!

“ Alas! my unhappy child! why do I not express such a wish for you? I have expressed it—I have prayed for its accomplishment—I have wept in bitterness the idea of its being unavailing, lost to the noble propensities of nature; it is not from virtue, but from pomp and vanity you seek to derive pleasure.

“ Oh! lovely orphans of Malvina, did you but know, or could you but conceive, the bitter anguish I endure on my daughter's account, you would think yourselves amply avenged for all your injuries.

“ Oh, God! ere my trembling soul leaves its frail tenement of clay, let it be cheered by the knowledge of my child's repentance.

“ Oh! you, ye young and tender pair, who are about entering into the dangerous possession of riches, learn from me that their misapplication, the perversion of our talents, and the neglect of our duties, will, even in this world, meet their punishment.

“ Resolute

“ Resolute in doing justice to the utmost of my power, I am ready, whenever I am called upon, to bear evidence to the validity of the will I shall deliver into your possession. Soon may all it entitles you to be restored, is the sincere prayer of her, who subscribes herself,

The truly Penitent,

ANNABELLA DUNREATH.”

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

